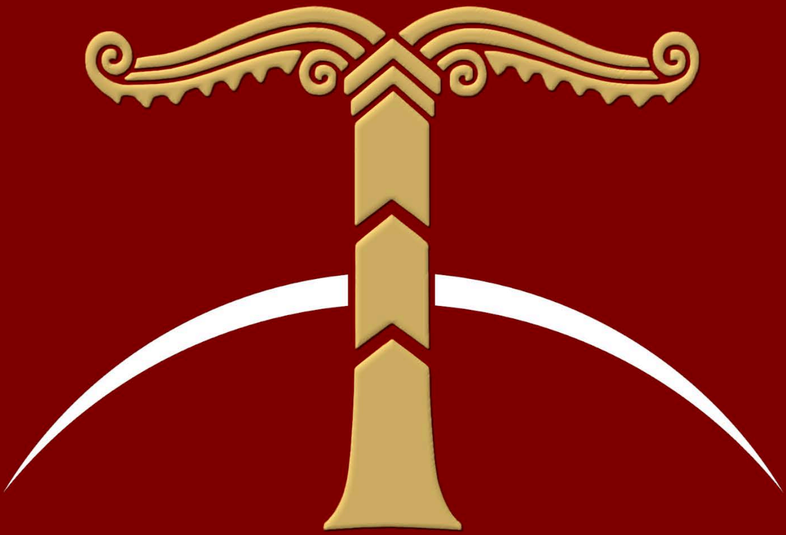
Hyperborea

In Search of the Lost Homeland



Gianfranco Drioli

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HYPERBOREA
In Search of the Lost Homeland

TRADITION

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Neither by land nor by sea will you find the road that leads to the Hyperboreans.

- Pindar

PROLEGOMENI

Everything is unknown: an enigma, an inexplicable mystery.
Doubt, uncertainty, suspension of judgment appear
the only result of any of our most careful investigations.

- David Hume

It stings me vaguely (as a friend of mine used to say mockingly whenever he had the intention of tormenting me with some concion on futile or trivial topics) to preface this little book of mine with the one Latin stanza with which Nostradamus introduced his Centuries. Since I do not pretend that you all know Latin, I will follow with the relevant translation.

LEGIS CAUTIO CONTRA INEPTOS CRITICOS.
Quos legent hosce versus mature
Profanum vulgus et inscium ne attrectato.
Omnesque Astrologi Blenni Barbari procul sunto.
Qui aliter facit is rite sacer esto .

EXECRATION AGAINST INEPT CRITICS
Let those who read these verses think carefully about them,
The profane and ignorant vulgar do not touch them,
Astrologers, fools and uneducated shall not approach them,
Whoever does otherwise shall be subjected to the sacred rites.

Granted, for those who do not know, that these verses of Nostradamus are actually a plagiarism, suitably tweaked (presumably, according to some exegetes, to cipher a message), of some verses by Pietro Baldi del Riccio, a poet, biographer and humanist who was as highly regarded in his time as he is forgotten nowadays, I will tell you that what I have written derives largely from many studies carried out especially in the last two centuries by a large number of researchers. There are innumerable books that have attempted to elucidate the origins of certain concordant myths, Hyperborea, Atlantis, Eden; I do not pretend to say the last word, I have only that of collecting a lot of data, many times convergent, others discordant, attempting to offer you readers an overview. It is not intended here to claim that everything is clear and straightforward, this hardly happens, perhaps only in novels, where the author invents the plot. I have not invented a plot, I have only found scraps of information, which sometimes fit together, but often are only pieces of an inexhaustible puzzle. I sought data and information from different authors, sometimes enthusiastically adhering to their theses, other times expressing my disagreement or perplexity. However, always acknowledging their interest in such a complex and difficult topic. Already history suffers from the complexity and divergence of sources, let alone the arduous task of trying to shape prehistory, indeed the history of prehistory. Imagine that in a few thousand years someone finds a Soviet-era text describing the West: in the absence of other diverse sources our distant descendants would see our recent past history in a distorted view, assuming a later victory of Marxism over capitalism. We shall see together how the myths agree in many points with each other, albeit with different expressions, and many will be the possible explanations, just as many will be the impossibilities of arriving at an "authentic" interpretation. All the myths we know have come down to us from before history began to be written, and even in those days they were already covered by a copious layer of dust, formed over millennia of oblivion. It is a fact, however, that myths strangely resurrect centuries later, as if they sometimes live a life of their own. Like that of the mythical archer (be he Pandarus, Orion, Teucer, Philoctetes, Sudhanuan or any other character) who reappears in the form of Wilhelm Tell or Robin Hood. I ask all of you who are beginning to peruse this book to have a lot of patience and understanding; these are two virtues necessary to bear with me. I will not expand more in this introduction, because a long itinerary through time, space and themes awaits you. This book is written for those who live *in* this world but do not feel *of* this world.

I thank you in advance for your indulgence.

IN SEARCH OF THE PAST

The past is the substance of which time is made.

- *Jorge Luis Borges*

Huginn and Munnin, the two ravens that always accompanied Odin, the Thought and the Remembrance; I first encountered them in a brief summary of the Edda in a very old Encyclopedia, one of the first books with which I tried to learn a little bit of everything, along with a translation of the text of Titus Livy *Ab Urbe condita libri CXLII* in an abridged version for children. I found the Edda fascinating, so a few years later I sought out the complete text and literally devoured it, along with all the tales of classical mythology. I have always had a keen curiosity for ancient sagas and legends of all origins, where I seemed to find memories of events forgotten for millennia, if not eras.

Thought and Remembrance, two moments of being, two epiphenomena of consciousness, two atoms that should be inseparable in the albeit mutable sublunar world, a kaleidoscope sometimes of futility. Many times, reading books from different disciplines, as well as listening to various, different and varied opinions in the course of many conversations, I had the clear impression that I was hearing things that I already knew but was unaware that I knew. As if something was causing previously accumulated information and data to surface in my memory (but when, were they perhaps memories of the future?), assimilated, but not perceived. A memory that I felt was immediately mine, though without understanding the how and when. As in, one knows what one knows, because one knows it.

And that's it.

Tautological, although as an explanation it turns out rather paltry. Years later I found René Guénon's books, whose logic appeared compelling, and could discover his differentiation between intuition, reason and intuitive intellect. Perhaps that was the explanation. Beyond intuition and reason, there was another human function, perhaps often overlooked. Perhaps it was memory that resurfaced from the red stream of blood, from that hemoglobin carrier of emotions....

I have always been fascinated by various different disciplines: history, archaeology, mysteries, knowledge in general. I am incurable curious or maybe just nosy.

Among the varied and messy interests of past youthful years was the mystery of ancient civilizations, which developed sometimes almost suddenly, as if they had inherited knowledge from some even more ancient culture.

But this, as is well known, was beyond the scope of the possibilities offered by officially established and unified science distributed in pills (the malignant would say in suppositories) by schools and universities halfway around the world (and perhaps the other half as well).

Among my other absurd and heretical curiosities was that inappropriate little story (or perhaps it would be better to say, in *strictu sensu* etymological *sense*, legend) concerning the myth of Atlantis, the island allegedly imaginary (according to many) or invented to express a political utopia (according to others), mentioned by Plato. Who, if he was considered valid and was revered when he spoke of the cave myth and doctored on the great philosophical themes, became for most a deluded (at best) or a charlatan (at worst) when he spoke of the kingdom of Atlantis.

Liters of ink have since been spilled and thousands of books written about this mythical place, seeking the most disparate geographic locations (from insignificant little islands in the Mediterranean to the Antarctic continent, via the Tassili graffiti and Tartesso and a thousand other places) and philosophizing on all too often impractical topics such as the political system, religious experience, connection with stellar civilizations, peoples of giants and demigods, nations of oceanic sirenoids, immeasurable powers of telekinesis, and you name it. Fantasies perhaps malicious. Or an excuse to sell books.

In short, there were two abundant interpretative strands of the great Greek philosopher's account: the one that peremptorily established the absolute nonexistence of Atlantis and the one that imagined it as an unreal paradise worthy of the worst science fiction tales.

I think branding Plato an imaginative liar is disrespectful; after all, this is a philosopher worthy of all respect, not an ignorant writer like me. And to consider that he wanted to present a utopia does not seem correct. After all, it should be considered that he has given an accurate description of the places, accurately citing dimensions and measurements.

That one would certainly need to know how to interpret. Arduous undertaking.

The presence of ancient civilizations in different places and certain affinities between them should give us pause.

The movement of human groups was slow, both because of the distances traveled and the means available at the time.

If the Bible mentions the forty years (a term indicative not of a definite time period but of a generic broad chronological span) of Moses in the Sinai desert, I can scarcely imagine how long it took for the movements within Eurasia and Africa alone. Nor do I want to mention the Americas, Australia and Oceania.

I have always been under the impression that the history of prehistory (pardon the bistic) is much more complex and articulated than we imagine it to be.

And so, based on the studies of the last century, I will try to hypothesize a hint of interpretation of prehistory that takes this into account. I do not want to offer a predigested explanation, but to try, perhaps groaning as Pascal said.

In the West we are used to considering as the center of the birth of civilization an area between the Tigris and Euphrates, on the one hand, and around the Nile, on the other. In this view, Europe was a gigantic wilderness populated by semi-wild peoples, and the Far East was almost ignored (just as the geographical definition *Hic sunt leones* applied to Africa, *Hic sunt Tigres aut Dracones* might have been said for East Asia). Oceania was practically nonexistent, entered late in the maps it kept a low profile, in fact very low. In fact almost no profile at all.

I will briefly expound current theories on the origins of the so-called Homo sapiens and its development toward civilization, and then turn to some cultures that have left us relevant evidence for a convergence of views on the genesis of man. I have followed the ancient canonical civilizations, such as Greece, Egypt, Assyrians-Babylonians, as well as the less investigated Orientals, such as China, Japan, India and Persia, with some mention of the Americas. However, I do not intend to neglect either the contributions of very valuable scholars of the last two centuries or those of interesting contemporary researchers. In particular, as far as European civilizations are concerned, however, I have not developed the research extensively since many points of comparison with other distant cultures will be found. It must also be said that certain data, concerning pre-Indo-European and European cultures (such as Celtic, Norse etc.) would have required other considerable space, making this already quite substantial text too heavy. You will, however, be able to find many insights to gratify any interest in delving deeper into the relevant topics.

In addition there are several chapters (you may say there are too many) on unanimously common myths scattered all over the earth.

Availing myself of studies by different researchers, whom I will quote appropriately, I hope to hint at hypotheses different from the usual ones. I hope to enlist the help of the two ravens, for, as the Edda says, they are continually flying around the earth, and if I fear that Huginn will not return, I fear even more that Munnin may go astray.

THE ORIGIN OF MAN

An evolution is a destiny

- Thomas Mann

Munnin has come to rest on my shoulder, like the pirate parrots, but he doesn't croak, he whispers in my ear, "Remember, remember..." and then it occurs to me that, all things considered, we don't think much about the timing of man's origin, more or less *sapiens*, because there always remains a reasonable quota of doubt about this flaunted characteristic.

Thanks to Mendel's work on hereditary transmission in plants, De Vries's work on mutations and Morgan's work on drosophila genetics, and recent studies on DNA and RNA (deoxyribonucleic and ribonucleic acids), we know that in order to modify species and make them evolve, mutations must be caused in the genome (i.e., the set of genes) of their reproductive cells, which are more sensitive than somatic cells, the alteration of which causes aging or cancer instead. Instead, the mutation of reproductive cells generates such modifications, that they will result in the birth of a new species or monstrosity. The animal carrying the modification must adapt to its environment, and if the mutation is favorable, it imposes itself. When the two species, the original and the mutated, diverge from each other, habits and way of life also diverge. Mating also becomes sterile: the donkey and the mare may mate, but the result, the mule, is sterile; horse and zebra will never have offspring. These are species that are too far apart. However, this theory is now being challenged by reality: let's take a wolf and a German shepherd, theoretically they should be intersterile, however, they are not, instead they will generate splendid and fertile animals. *Siberian huskies* are often crossed with wolves to improve breed characteristics. Pekingese can never mate with Great Danes, though; a forced union between them would be sterile anyway. A UC Berkeley anthropology professor, Vincent Matthew Sarich, has accounted for the levels of separation between species, establishing the existence of a Biological Unit between species. For example, there are 6 units of difference between chimpanzees and gorillas, 7 between them and humans, 31 between the *rhesus* macaque and the former species; the horse and zebra have 8 units of difference between them and 180 with humans.

Incompatibilities between ancient humanoid types are believed to have existed (e.g., between Neanderthals and Cro-magnons), but we have no evidence for this. However, interracial sterility is also seen in *Homo sapiens*. Unions between Europeans with Tasmanians and Fuegians are rarely fertile or otherwise sterile in the second generation.

Our ancestor would be *Homo erectus*, however, there are many different ones: Sinanthropus of Pekin, Pithecanthropus of Java, Atlantropus of Algeria, Heidelberg man, Telanthropus of Zwartkrans. *Erectus* is an intermediate type with varied cranial capacity (750 to 1285 cc) that can be placed about 2 million years ago. Instead, 250,000 years ago, according to the currently accredited chronology, Neanderthal Man (*homo sapiens faber*) appeared, whose fossil remains have been found almost everywhere, characterized by extremely diversified forms, ranging from the most evolved *Erectus* to the most primitive Cro-magnon, with an average height of 1.55 m and a cranial capacity between 1250 and 1600 cc, thus higher than that of the most primitive present-day man (1200-1300 cc). This would have been an evolving species. It seems attested that the present racial divergences date back to the segregation of hunter-gatherer groups in the Middle Paleolithic, i.e., Neanderthal epoch, and that as early as the Riss-Wurm interglacial period (125,000-75,000 B.C.) the Cro-magnons coexisted with the Neanderthals. From them would have descended *Homo sapiens sapiens*, while for the Mongolians it is noted that the oldest type, the Paleosiberian (similar to Neanderthals), is found among present-day Tungusi. According to some scholars, the Australoid *phylum* originated 600,000 years ago with the Pithecanthropus of Java, through Ngandong man (150,000 years) to the present Australoids, who penetrated Australia 35,000 years ago. The great Neandertalian race would have diversified into two branches about 80,000 years ago: the first branch was the typical Neandertalian; the second branch would have differentiated into three further branches: great Mongolian race, great leucoderm race (which through protocromagnons would have given rise to different white populations) and great melanoderm race (which would have differentiated into African and

South-Arabian Neandertaloids). This broad monocentrist theory was accepted by UNESCO in 1972 and opposes Weidenreich's polycentrist theories, which saw remontant diversification as early as *Erectus*. Neanderthals develop primitive techniques, which will remain unchanged until the appearance of modern humans, with different stages in different places. Thus in Africa the Stillbay-Pieterburg cultures in Rhodesia, the Singa culture in Sudan and the Cape-Flats culture in the Cape will remain at the same level until 23,000 years ago, when the Bushmen appeared. In Asia, the Kwang-dong culture , dating back 80,000 years, morphed into the Ordo culture (Mongolian group), which developed in the Gobi Desert (Inner Mongolia) from the Paleolithic to the Bronze Age. In contrast, in Western Asia, Europe and the Middle East, where the Neanderthals will give rise to the Cro-Magnoids, or *Homo sapiens* leucodermo, the techniques will be earlier and more advanced: 60,000 years ago in the Middle East and 40,000 in Europe. In Siberia, however, the Ordo culture will last until 20,000 years ago.

Let us briefly see how one would have gone from Neanderthal to Cro-magnon:

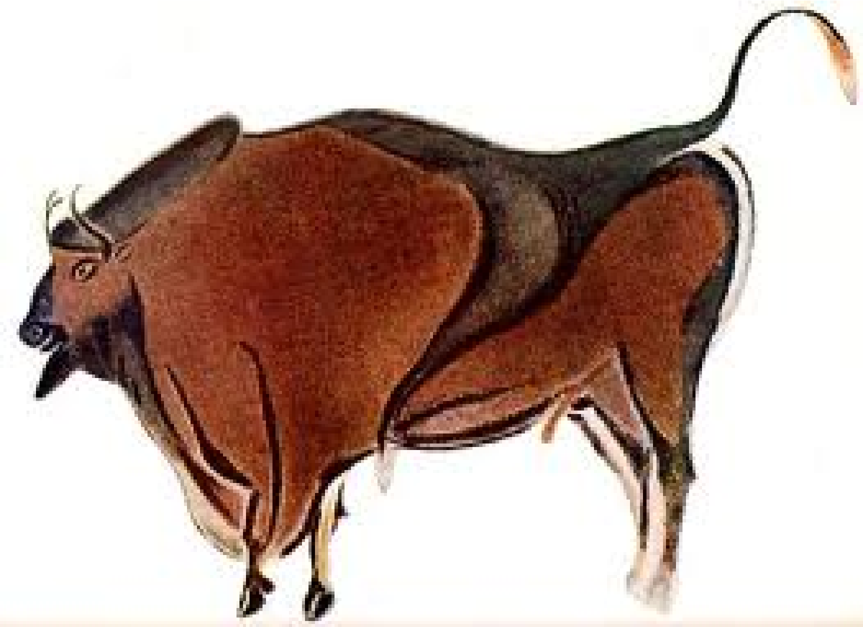
(-200,000-125,000) Riss glaciation: first differentiations by micro mutations.

(-125,000 -75,000) Interglacial Riss-Wurm: more pronounced differentiations;

(-80,000-60,000) appearance of *Homo Neanderthalis Shanidarensis*, between the Aegean, Black and Caspian Seas, southern Ukraine and the Balkans;

(-60,000-35,000) disappearance of Neanderthals, possibly by epidemics, possibly eliminated by Cro-magnons.

With the advent of the Neolithic period, of which we know only evidence dating back to 10,000 B.C. in the Middle East and Japan (Jomon period) and then in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, and northern Africa, the great races were established and the first ethnic groups began to form, thanks to the intermingling of different groups and the dispersal of chromagnoids. Morphological differences among different human groups responded to the continuous mutations to adapt to the environment: thus dark skin would serve as protection against sunlight, almond-shaped eyes as protection against glare and cold, a long narrow nose for steppe winds, frizzy hair favored aeration of the head, and so on. However, it should always be kept in mind that different human types could exist and coexist simultaneously in the same period, with differentiated technological evolution. Which still occurs today, we see for example the different ethnic groups of Australia, ranging from the Stone Age to the Atomic Age. About 40,000 years ago there appeared abruptly in Europe the Cro-magnon, on average 1.75 m tall, slender, with a cranial capacity of between 1,300 and 1,600 cc, with remarkable manual dexterity associated with an imaginative spirit. It had the ability to speak, being endowed with a throat and mouth conformation similar to ours, an appreciable artistic disposition (Lascaux, Balzi-Rossi, Altamira), and inhabited Europe, Asia, Africa and North America).



White chromagnoids developed in the steppes of northern Asia, spreading to northern Europe on one side and to the Behring Strait on the other, eventually descending to central Asia. They learned the art of harpoon fishing at least 18,000 years ago, harvested mollusks and crustaceans, began cultivating grasses, preserved food by drying meat in the sun or smoking it, carved bone and ivory, noted the phases of the moon as early as 30,000 years ago with a mnemotechnical system (Gontzi and Blanchard bones), and engraved numerical sequences (Ishango bones). However...there are also strange geometric engravings on a bone, found in Pech de l'Azé, France, dating from between 90,000 and 60,000 years ago; but they are not the only ones, because an elephant tibia, engraved in a symmetrical form and dating back 350,000 years, was also found in Bilzingsleben, Thuringia. The situation now seems complicated, but now I will make it worse. Recently some bones of antelopes and other animals were found in Ethiopia with signs of stone tools for cutting meat. The dating of these bones puts them in a period of about 3.39 million years ago. The archaeological site is relatively close to the one where the famous Lucy was found. But then were these hominids more evolved than we have imagined until now? I make not the slightest claim to a satisfactory answer. Perhaps one should always consider that technological development was never the same for everyone and in all places, and that human evolution moved at different speeds from place to place and group to group. In short, opinions are mixed, the evidence is not unambiguous, and the only wise thing I can say is that we are not able to answer all questions in a coherent form. Keeping in mind the hypothesis that evolutionary speed has never been the same, we will then see if genetics will help us.

However, lest I be accused of partisanship in favor of evolutionism, I must report that there are also other theories about the origin of the human species. The best known is that of creationism, which presupposes a specific intervention of some deity, in short--in varying versions according to peoples and religions--something like the Bible, Adam, Eve, etc.

But another possibility should not be forgotten: if we see a line, we can say that it is proceeding, but not toward which side, i.e., there may be a form of involution. It is not the case to develop this theory here, which enters the realm of the so-called Primordial Tradition (as a redefinition of metaphysics), as it would require considerable elaboration and too wide a digression from our topic of reference. Any interested parties can go and read de Maistre, Guénon, Sermonti and the various involutional studies. I will only mention these concepts: When one speaks of Primordial Tradition one walks on ice. This would be the religious and social heritage, the civilization of the people of the Hyperboreans and especially their sapiential summation. The Hyperboreans would represent a remote civilization that in distant antiquity would have populated the then temperate polar zones; they would be the ancestors of the Cromagnons, dating back 30,000 to 40,000 years. Their Primordial Tradition would later be transmitted to the Indo-Europeans. A wisdom of non-human origin originally revealed to them when they lived in the Golden Age, when man was in contact with divinity. They are described as semi-divine beings, with a body that was not completely material, so much so that they are described as having soft bones; that is why they would not have left fossil remains. For reasons I will not expound here, they would have had a fall (Book of Enoch, expulsion from the earthly paradise, ice flood of the Iranians,...) and would have had to leave their seat and disperse on earth. We will find traces of this account in some Far Eastern traditions.

A PINCH OF GENETICS

The history of evolution teaches that the universe

never stopped being creative or inventive.

- *Karl Popper*

There are currently considered to be four main evolutionary factors: mutation (causing new genetic types), natural selection (choosing the types best adapted to the environment), genetic drift (evolution of the species due to random factors with statistical fluctuation of gene frequencies from one generation to the next), and migration of individuals from one place to another or from one population to another. It is appropriate to clarify the concept of genetic drift, based on the calculation of probability. In a given place, all or most of the inhabitants have blue eyes. We can assume that at first the inhabitants were few in number and all randomly had blue eyes. Probability statistically low, but not impossible. Later generations would have eliminated by random fluctuation any individuals having genes carrying a different eye coloration. The smaller the original population, the greater the random fluctuations, tending toward an increasingly homogeneous population. Then would eye color or any other genotypic characteristic be determined by this drift? Maybe that yes, maybe that no. Because natural selection may also have had a hand in it. Or adaptation to the environment. Having said that just to create discouragement in my readers, I will begin to address - in brief - the theory of primate evolution. From a common ancestor would have arisen first the gorilla, then from another evolutionary line the ancestor of humans and chimpanzees. The first humans, according to current studies in genetics, which I will not discuss because they are specialized, gave rise to two branches: the first originated pygmies and African melanoderms, the second on the one hand gave rise to Europoid leucoderms and Asian xanthoderms, and on the other to Australians and Melanesians. This is in extremely summary form. The separation between African and non-African humans would have occurred between 62,000 and 95,000 years ago, according to a recent study of mitochondrial DNA (i.e., that which is inherited from the mother), which would confirm paleontology's dating of human evolutionary history. However, some recent studies, which had compared the gene sequences of fathers and sons, wanted to backdate all the most relevant stages of human evolution. For example, the separation of non-African from African populations would be between 90,000 and 130,000 years ago, and not 60,000 years ago, as established by previous research. In scientific circles, the debate is still heated and vehement.

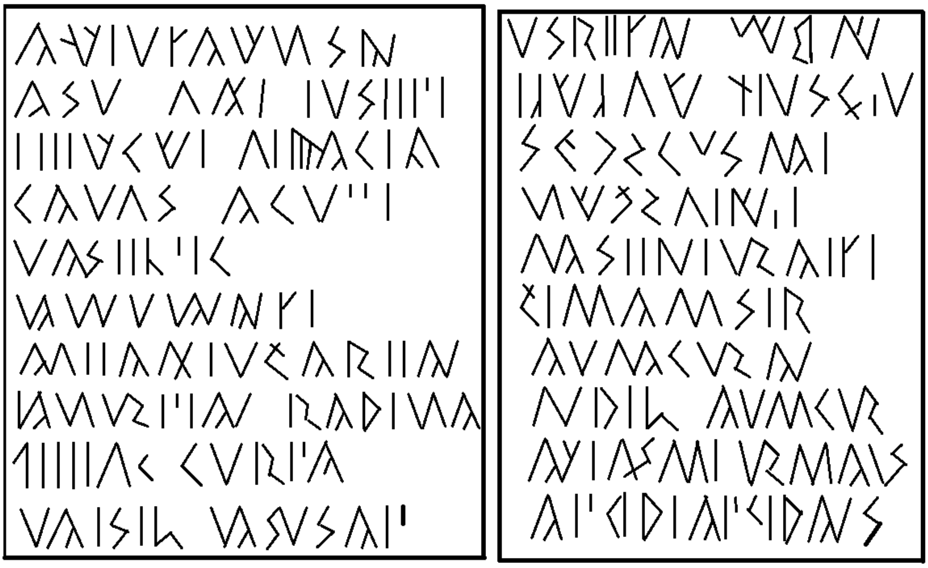
I don't know what to say. In fact, I won't say anything.

Sometimes I have the impression that science, like all of us, is also fumbling. But I at least admit it. There has often been talk about the African Eve, the supposed mother of all men. Granted that there is no evidence of the existence at any time of a single common mother, scholars agree that the pseudo-Eve should date from about 190,000 years ago, long before the separation of Africans and non-Africans. Recent (1995) research by Japanese scientists Horai, Hayasaka, Kondo, Tsugane and Takahata, done on European, Asian and African individuals, would have determined an age of 143,000 years for the Eve.

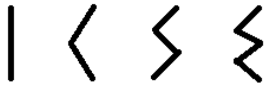
According to the most recent classifications there are currently four Great Races on earth: the Australoid (currently represented by the Aborigines of Australia, New Zealand and the Vedda of Sri Lanka), Leucoderm (or Europoid), Xanthoderm (or Mongoloid) and Melanoderm (or Negroid). On the other hand, one could not properly speak of a Great Semitic Race, since the so-called Semites would be the result of the cross between Melanoderms, Xanthoderms (Turanian) and Leucoderms. However, the branches of *Homo sapiens sapiens* would have somehow separated and spread to areas often far apart. The African melanoderms would have spread across Africa, giving rise to many different populations or races, the Asian xanthoderms would have spread from East Central Asia, and the leucoderms would have spread from northern Siberia, pushing into the Americas (either by crossing the Beringia in the east or by sailing across the Atlantic in the west, skirting the ice floe, which then reached as far as southern England), into China (Tocari), Korea and Japan (Ainu), India (Aryans), Persia (Iranians), Asia Minor and nearby areas (Hittites and Mitanni), Europe (Pelasgians, Etruscans, Achaeans, Sea Peoples, Ligurians, Thraco-illiric, Celts, Germans, Dorians, Cimmerians, etc.).

An interesting study (*Egipcios, Bereberes, Guanches y Vascos*) by Antonio Arnáiz Villena, former chair of the *Universidad Complutense* in Madrid, and historian Jorge Alonso García, brings to collation an interesting parallel between languages and genetic characteristics. I report here some of their observations, worthy of consideration. Currently, the only surviving Osco-Mediterranean languages are Basque and Berber. Oscan was the language spoken by Samnites and Oscans in Italy in pre-Roman times. According to these authors, other related languages, now dead, existed, such as Tartessic, Etruscan, Cretan, Guancio, Egyptian, Hittite, Elamite, and Sumerian. All the peoples who spoke these languages would have been genetically related, belonging to a very ancient European and North African substratum, while the Greeks, who arrived in the Mediterranean more recently, around 2000 B.C., belonged to a different ethnic and linguistic strain. In the Mediterranean Sea, sea relations had been very frequent during the last ice ages, and genetic, idiomatic and cultural flow had been constant. It is thus attested that the present-day Berbers are closely related to the Mediterranean peoples of both Europe and Africa. Comparison of languages revealed an important common etymological substratum in the Basque (Euskera) and Berber (Tamazight) languages, which would have helped decipher many Libyan inscriptions, often thousands of years old. The modern Berber alphabet (tifinagh) has remained very similar to the ancient eastern Libyan alphabet. Interestingly, a cult of the Earth Mother, goddess of the underworld, emerges from the translations made by the authors. In the Canary Islands, where the Guanches became extinct due to a long and distressing history of cruelty by Spanish invaders, a language very similar to Basque was spoken, as evidenced by historical evidence and the survival of ancient place names. The writing of the Guanches possesses very peculiar characteristics, partly similar to Levantine Iberian, resembling Tartessic; it is written, however, unlike Tartessic, from left to right. As for Egypt, these authors believe that around 7000 B.C. Capsiense culture had developed in the northern Mediterranean and Sahara, followed later by Khartumiense (5000-4000 B.C.). Here are some of its cultural characteristics: megaliths, circumcision, tattoos, snake, ram and sun disk cults, skulls deformed with bandages, mummification by burial in hot desert sand. After 6000 the Sahara dried up quickly and a culture developed near the Nile (4000 B.C.), with symbols such as the Upper Egyptian crown, the Horus hawk, the boat of Ra and the Pharaonic Boat. A singular detail: hieroglyphic inscriptions do not abound in the pyramids: barely those of Unas and Teti (near Saqqara), from the 5th and 6th dynasties, respectively, have hieroglyphs in their interiors. These scholars speculate, based on ancient place names, that the Egyptians spoke an Osco-Mediterranean idiom such as Berber and Euskera. They also opine that Etruscan can be interpreted with Euskera terms, and so they have proposed a translation of the *Liber linteus or Agramensis*, that is, the bandages that wrapped the so-called Zagreb Mummy, These are 12 linen panels with an Etruscan inscription of about 1,200 words, the largest in existence. Their translation, which I viewed, would hint at a liturgy of the dead. So they also proposed a decipherment of the Book of the Dead and the Kadesh battle stele, very different from the canonical ones. Personally, I am puzzled, but I do not consider myself in a position to make judgments on this. Instead, I found the genetic study on the Mediterranean populations more interesting, highlighting the close Mediterranean relationships. Genetic distances were calculated from HLA-DR, -DQ allele frequency data, so all Mediterranean populations would be related, including Berbers, Egyptians, Turks, Iranians, Armenians and Basques. In contrast, Orientals, Africans and Greeks would be groups with no relationship to ancient Mediterranean peoples. A good problem to solve.

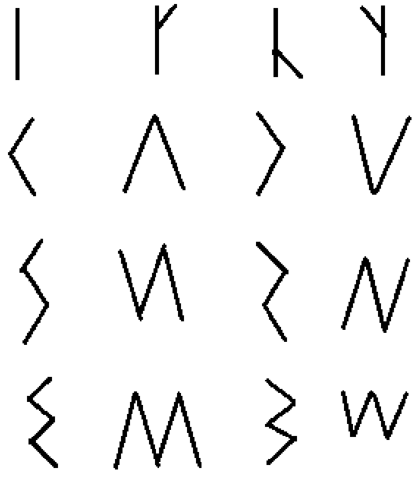
I had the opportunity to view a possibly heretical theory that some of our present alphabetical signs were already present in prehistoric times. This was on the basis of ancient signs observed on rock carvings on the islands of Fuerteventura and Lanzarote, known around the 1980s and transcribed by Prof. Werner Pichler in his article *Die Schrift der Ostinseln Corpus der Inschriften auf Fuerteventura* (*Almogaren XXIII/1992*).



The study and analysis of these signs, according to researcher Agustín Demetrio Pallarés Lasso, would show that the writing system was formed through a logical succession of a quaternary character.



Starting with a straight line, then successively broken into two, three and four segments. Then the marks were turned clockwise 90° at a time, resulting in 16 marks.



Interesting theory, all to be proven, however the Canary Island signs are very reminiscent of the Runic alphabet; they are also similar to scripts found in Greece (Dispilio), Romania (Vinça), Macedonia (Sitovo and Gardesnica). But we will now try to see how the civilization developed on the various continents. I will attempt to give an idea where possible. For Africa we have a clear prevalence of oral sources, so for a reconstruction of its history we are in great difficulty, partly because of the perishability of any archaeological finds, the absence of written traditions, before the nineteenth century, the absence of deeds or land registries, and the non-existence of private land ownership. The European perspective on African history, imposed in the 19th and 20th centuries, is often accused of racism, because it places all manifestations of social life in Africa in a lower order.

According to the famous British anthropologist Charles Gabriel Seligman, the only contributions of the African continent to human history must be attributed to "non-African or, if African, non-black populations." Already Hegel had asserted that "Africa is not a historical part of the world [...] it is the spirit without history, the undeveloped spirit, still wrapped up in natural conditions." And historian Hugh Trevor-Roper also asserted that "perhaps in the future there will be some African history [...] but at present there is none, there is only the history of Europeans in Africa. Before these giants of thought, I cannot assert anything that appears contrary. Nor can I adhere to their views lest I be accused of racism.

Recently, in 2010, Russian paleontologists found traces of a hitherto unknown race of primitive man (Denisova Homo) in the Altai. From the genetic analysis of the remains they concluded that this hominid genetically corresponds 17 percent to Neandertal man and 4 percent to a hitherto unknown hominid species. The DNA study showed that the genes of these hominids coincided 6% with those of present-day populations in Southeast Asia. This population had moved to the Altai (=Golden Mountains) area, while some groups would have migrated to the southeast. Their genes have not been detected in the fossils of humans from Southeast Asia and China, i.e., the territories where they are presumed to have transited, but have instead been found in populations currently living in those geographic areas. These data would indicate that Homo of Denisova contributed to the evolution of the human species as we know it now. During the Denisova excavations, archaeologists detected in the cave near the excavations both the remains of Neanderthals and traces of Denisova Homo, proving that the two hominids had lived at the same time. So it has been hypothesized that both species made contributions to the formation of humankind. This is what is known as genealogical selection, in certain territories races have intermingled with each other, and the latest research has shown that this was also the case with Denisova's Homo and Neandertal's Homo. This is a sensational discovery. At this time, the family tree of humankind would look as follows: there were four species of modern humans: African Homo sapiens, Eurasian Neandertal man, Denisova Homo, and Oriental man, who lived where China is now.

It follows that it is no longer possible to support the hitherto popular monocentric theory that human beings had appeared in Africa and spread and differentiated from there. The idea of Anatolij Derevjanko, a distinguished Russian scholar, who argues for pluricentrism, which is also confirmed by the data of many Russian paleontologists and archaeologists, turns out to be much more convincing. In the scientific world, the discovery of Denisova's Homo remains ranks second in importance after the discovery of the Higgs boson.

WAS EDEN IN THE FAR NORTH?

We live in a paradise,

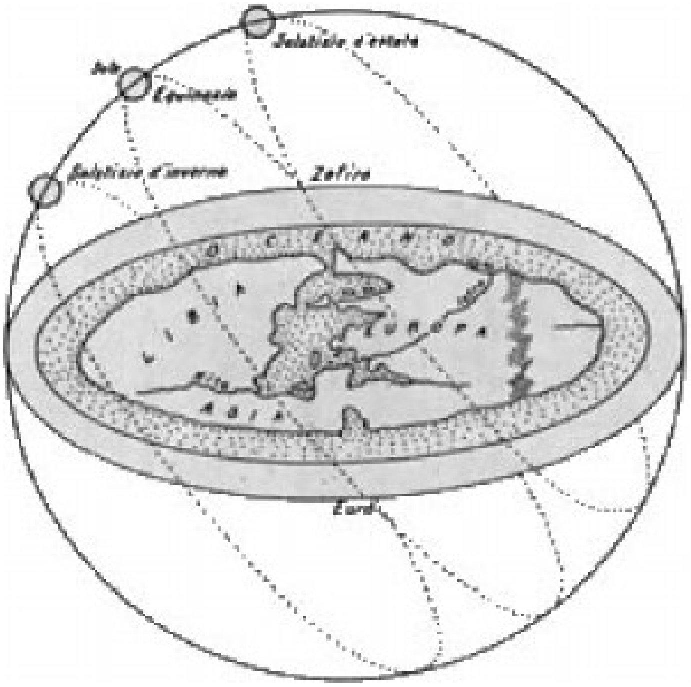
But we do not care to know.

– Feodor Dostoyevsky

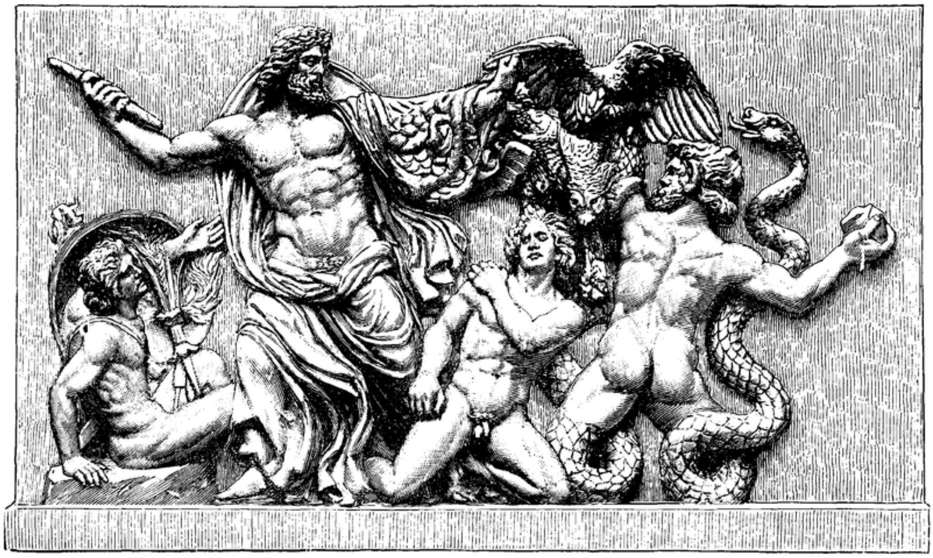
But let us now begin to look at some hypotheses about the primordial seat of man. To the best of my knowledge, the first hypothesis in modern times that placed the birth of civilization in the North Pole area was that of William Fairfield Warren, first president of Boston University from 1873 to 1903. He had studied first in the United States and then in Germany, where he became a professor of theology at the Methodist Episcopal Missionary Institute in Bremen. Later, as president of Boston University, he taught comparative theology and philosophy of religion. A man of great learning, he started from narrow religious principles, thus totally rejecting Darwinism. Among his many works I am interested to recall *Paradise Found-the Cradle of the Human Race at the North Pole.* In this book he placed Atlantis at the North Pole, identifying it with the Garden of Eden, Mount Meru, Avalon and Hyperborea, believing that all these mythical lands represented the memory of an anciently inhabited area in which man would be created. Since, barring any errors, there is no Italian translation of this book, I am compelled to report here a compendium of some of the arguments discussed, extracted from the original 1885 edition, tending to prove this thesis of his. I apologize in advance for the size of this chapter, but I could not help but report at least the essentials of this ponderous text.

Warren identified Atlantis with the Pole on the basis of Greek mythology, where the Titan Atlas supported the heavens on his shoulders or held the earth on a pillar; and Plato, in the Cirtia, mentions Atlas as the first king of Atlantis. This would be the axis of the world of ancient legends, of Yggdrasil, the sacred ash tree of Voluspa, of Irminsul, the pillar between earth and heaven. And this axis *mundi*, the axis of the world, had to be on the summit of the world, the North Pole. Warren also noted how Homer, Virgil and Hesiod placed Atlas at the edge of the earth as the pillar of the world. But the most obvious boundaries of the world are the Arctic regions. And Euripides also related Atlas to the North Star.

The author notes that we have the belief that for Homer the earth was flat; this error gave rise to the contradictory locations of Hades. This problem has divided Homeric interpreters into dozens of different fronts, each armed against the other. Too many differing opinions, caused by a lack of knowledge of the geographical problem. The idea that the ancients believed the earth was flat was the cause of so many difficulties found in representing both the ocean and the earth's water system. Warren highlights four problems. First, how could all rivers and waters be thought to derive from the ocean? This is a difficult concept to clarify. Homer spoke of "an immediate in-flow," a seemingly incomprehensible term. A second embarrassing question was, "If the ocean surrounded the flat earth and was its outer boundary, what supported it and constituted its other shore?" Was it a narrow strip of land, or was it formless chaos, or the descending edge of the sky, or the force of the waters themselves? In short, it was unclear what bounded the ocean externally. The usual interpretation was that the Homeric sky was made of metal, like the lid of a soup bowl, so the metal circle of the sky would be the outer boundary of the Ocean, like a lid on a serving dish, with the earth in the middle like a pork roast. Thus the disk of the flat earth would have divided the hollow sphere of the universe into two equal parts. In this way, according to the current idea, one wants to interpret what Homer said, namely, that the stars bathed in the Ocean. But then how to explain that Odysseus, when he went to Hades, would have landed on the opposite shore? The third problem is that, according to Homer, Ellas is in the center of the earth no more than ten or eleven days' sail from the Ocean in any direction; and the poet calculates eighteen days' sail, as the shortest route, from Ogygia to the land of the Phaeacians. Yet Ogigia is the navel or center of the sea. Some will say that one wants to look for the hair in the egg. Perhaps it would be a case of interpreting popular beliefs instead, such as that the earth was circular and that Ellas was at the center of it. After all, the concept of distance is always very subjective.



Many therefore decided that Homer's distances were off and attempted to solve the problem by replacing the figure of the earth as a flat disk with that of a rectangle longer than wide from north to south. The fourth difficulty lies in the impossibility of reconciling Homer's ocean with the motion of the sun. In the evening the sun disappears under the ocean to rise again in the morning on the other side. Homer describes it as going εἶς ὑπὸ γαῖαν, under or behind the earth. But this flies in the face of the idea of a flat earth surrounded by ocean and an Hades, eternally in the dark, located to the west beyond the Ocean. If the sun sank into the ocean, hiding under the waters, it would not have gone εἶς ὑπὸ γαῖαν, but rather "under" the ocean. And then how would it reappear the next day from the east? In short, if we consider a flat earth, we are faced with insoluble problems. If, on the other hand, we assume it to be a sphere, all these problems vanish. From the Homeric point of view, the sun went "behind" the earth, to reappear on the opposite side. And if Homer knew the water cycle, it is safe to assume that he knew as we do that the Ocean was the source of all waters, and that there must have been an outer shore. It was the inability to understand that maintained the now universal dogma that in the Homeric poems Olympus was simply the mountain of Thessaly. By now everyone believes that for the Greeks the gods had really lived on the top of this mountain, which would also have been climbed by the Giants to get to the abode of the gods.



If instead we make a comparison with the religions of other peoples, we locate the abode of Homer's gods in the high heavens. Recalling the traditions of the Scandinavians and other peoples, we understand that Olympus represented the heavens, and that the mountain of Thessaly was named after the original heavenly high ground, being the highest mountain known to the Greeks. There is a passage (*Iliad, XIV*) that validates this view, whereby Hera, descending from the top of 'Olympus, moves from the northern sky. According to Homer's depiction, the abode of the gods is "the wide sky," not the atmospheric sky, but the upper sky, οὐρανὸν ἐν αἰθέρι καὶ νεφέλῃσιν, the celestial dome in which the sun, moon and stars rotate silently around the pole. For the ancient Greeks, as for the early Ario-Persians, this dome was seen as a celestial mountain populated by the gods. And this celestial mountain they had called Olympus. That of Thessaly, like all the mountains of the same name, were sacred only as symbols of their celestial archetype. In the Odyssey, XI, it might have seemed that Homer was speaking of the Thessalian Olympus; but in general Olympus is understood to mean the northern sky where the true abode of the gods is located. One only needs to know how to search the Homeric poems to understand this.

Warren notes that the designation of the gods with the formula οἳ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσιν is found twice in the Iliad and sixteen times in the Odyssey, but the phrases "possessing the vast heavens," Odyssey, XIX, and "possessing Olympus" have the same meaning. Thus in the Iliad, "immortals who possess the abodes of Olympus" and "gods who possess the vast heavens" are interchangeable phrases. So also "Olympus" and "the Uranians" are the names of the same beings. In Hesiod's Theogony, the expression ἐντός Ὀλύμπου, "within Olympus" appears no less than three times. Translating it according to the usual interpretation, one would locate the Palace of Zeus in the heart of a mountain and the Olympian gods would then become a kind of Troll. In Book XXIV of the Iliad it is said that Iris and Thetis were thrust up "to the heavens" (οὐρανὸν ἐς). Jupiter begins the speech by saying, "You must come to Olympus, goddess Thetis"; and then the poet continues, "so he spoke; and the silver-footed goddess Thetis did not disobey, but running swiftly went to Olympus."

One of the most vivid images of life on Olympus throughout the Iliad is the one (Book XV) in which Zeus' punishment of Hera is described. In Vincenzo Monti's translation thus the father of the gods addresses her:

Wicked sly, thy subtle fraud
From the fray made the divine Ettorre cease,
And the Trojans flee. I know not why I
Now grasp thee not, and with the scourge do not make
To thee first assay of malice the fruit.
And remember not the day when both hands
Of golden knot unbreakable I clasped thee,
And to the celestial vault with two grave
Unclasped on the foot I hung thee?
Between the other clouds in the immense vault
Thou didst sway, and through the lofty
Olympus quivered with rage of it the Numbers,
But they could not melt away; for which of them
Had I grasped me, down from heaven
Would have swept him half-alive to earth.

In Book I Hephaestus recounts his banishment thus, "O my mother, though grieved, endure and be silent, for I do not wish to see you beaten; though grief-stricken I could not help you, it is too hard to oppose Zeus. Another time I wanted to help you, and the cruel one grabbed me by the foot and hurled me from the heavenly threshold (βηλοῦ θεσπεσίοιο). I precipitated all day long to Lemnos, where I fell at sunset." It is evident how this scene was conceived in the high vault of heaven. Moreover, Lemnos is certainly not located under Thessaly. The beginning of Book VIII is even clearer: "Let none of you gods and goddesses dare disobey me, helping the Greeks or the Trojans, if he does not want to return to Olympus badly stricken or to be seized by me and hurled into dark Tartarus, far away from here, where there is, under the earth with iron portals and a bronze threshold, a chasm as deep as the earth is from heaven. Then you will understand that I am the mightiest of gods. Do you want proof of that? Hang a golden chain from the sky and hang all of you and pull. However, you will not be able to pull the supreme Zeus to earth even with all your strength. Instead I, if I will, will be able to lift you all, together with the earth and the Ocean, up to Olympus. So great is my power over men and gods."

Any comment is superfluous. No one could argue that we are talking about the summit of a mountain. In Book XX Athena descends "from heaven"(οὐρανόθεν καταβᾶσα), while then her return is described as "to 'Olympus.'" In both the Iliad and the Odyssey the supplicants direct their prayers to "the starry sky," and the Olympian gods are called ὕπερθε μάρτυροι, or the "witnesses on high." So much so that many scholars have perceived and admitted the identity of Ὄλυμπος and the higher οὐρανός. In Homeric thought, therefore, the seat of the gods was in the high heavens. Seen with reference to the father of gods and men, the arc of polar sky was a palace, the royal residence, the δῶμα or δόμος of Zeus. Seen with reference to its colors, steel blue and gold, it has been described as metallic, σιδήρεος, χάλκεος and πολύχαλκος, terms misinterpreted literally as metals. It was depicted as a sky as high as a mountain, "snowy" as being covered with white clouds. In the Iliad (books VIII and XX) the expression πολύπτυχος appears . This definition, "the Olympus of many layers," or "thicknesses," is particularly expressive. Instead of translating as "ridges" of a mountain or mountain range, the concept of a multilayered firmament is noted, with one sky above the other. As in Dante's vision of Paradise. These heavens were conceived by Homer himself as overlapping layers, like the curved foils of a shield. And the comparison between sky and shield can be seen in the central ornament of Achilles' shield: the omphalos of the shield corresponded to the central omphalos of the sky. Then we need to understand what "the high pillars of Atlas" were for Homer. We are faced with many unanswered questions. For example: how can Homer speak of pillars of Atlas, using the plural, when elsewhere in Greek mythology only one pillar has always been mentioned? And if there is only one, in the west, near the gardens of the Hesperides, what would support the sky to the east, north and south? Or, if the pillars of Atlas are various, why would one be more important than the others? If the sky was supported in many places, how could Hesiod represent the entire vault of heaven balanced on Atlas' head and hands? And again, if the function of Atlas and his pillar is to stand on the earth to hold up the sky, we see no special relationship with the sea: why, then, would Homer have said that Atlas "knows all the depths of the sea"? There is no understanding. Yet Homer speaks of two pillars. But we go from bad to worse: Pausanias the Periegeta repeatedly states that, according to myth, Atlas supported earth and sky on his shoulders. Poetic license? Literal and mythological interpretations do not help us at all, while we find contradictions and absurd conjectures. But does myth make sense? We can only help ourselves by freeing our minds from preconceptions. Conceiving a celestial vault as given above leads us to think that the pillars of Atlas are the vertical axis between earth and sky. Seen respectively in their relationship to earth and sky, they are two; but seen in reference to the universe as an undivided whole, they are one and the same axis. They are coincident, they are truly one, even though they are ideally separable. So speaking of them in the singular or plural is equally correct. Passing from side to side the world at the "navel or center of the sea," Atlas' pillar penetrates the immensity of the waters, so it can be said that he knows the depth of the sea. Moreover, the relationship between Atlas and the Garden of the Hesperides confirms this hypothesis, since Aeschylus and the various ancient traditions located the Hesperides not in the west, but in the far north, beyond the Rifei Mountains, in the vicinity of the Hyperboreans. One can logically assume that the gardens of the Hesperides were nothing more than the starry gardens of the polar sky; not for nothing were the

Hesperides called "Daughters of the Night," and it is reasonable to infer that the dragon Ladon, who guarded the golden apples, was the constellation of the dragon, whose star, Thuban or Alpha Draconis, was, less than 5,000 years ago, the polar star of our sky. The name itself, Thuban, is Arabic and means Basilisk. Thus, the interpretation that Atlas supported both the sky and the earth is valid.

Homer, in describing the pillars of Atlas, identifies them with the axes of earth and sky so clearly that in order to maintain the misinterpretation it was necessary to invent and have adopted a special new meaning for the words ἀμφὶς ἔχειν. In Homer's idiom, ἔχει δέ τε κίονας αὐτὸςμακράς αἳ γαῖάν τε καὶ οὐρανὸν ἀμφὶς ἔχουσιν.[the paragraph continues] means "He who, by his own right, possesses high pillars that have the earth and the sky around them." Nowhere in Homer nor in ancient Greek does it mean "a shattered prop." The pillar atlas is evidently the axis of the world. It is the pillar itself mentioned in the Egyptian document known as the Great Harris Papyrus in these unmistakable words, "O long pillar, which begins in the upper and lower heavens!" It is clear what the Egyptians meant in their Book of the Dead when they spoke of the backbone of the earth. This is the djed, the supporting pillar, which later became the backbone of Osiris. It is the backbone of the Rig-Veda, it is the umbrella of Burmese cosmology, the staff of gods and demons of India, it is the trunk of every cosmic tree, the spear of Longinus, the spear of Izanagi, and so on. But it is also the Irminsul of the Germans and the ladder with seven lamps in the rites of Mithra. It is the Talmudic pillar that connects heavenly paradise to earthly paradise.

Unfortunately, based on unfounded assumptions, gross errors have been made in the interpretation of the Homeric texts. It has too often been assumed that the ancients knew nothing about the world, as if they had been total ignoramuses with unbridled and undisciplined imaginations, suffering from intellectual infantilism. This prejudice must be rejected. The beauty and depth of thought of the ancients, in poetry as in myth, have been tarnished by this presumptuous preconception of the moderns. By assuming that Homer could have no knowledge of the world beyond the Mediterranean Sea, the dimensions of the Odyssey have been mutilated. But this, after all, would almost be forgivable, if we think of the still-often-accepted little story that Christopher Columbus was the first man to whom the idea that the earth was round flashed. One cannot study antiquity like a book of fairy tales, but instead must take a more open attitude toward the ancients.

For the first people of an Arctic abode, the Zenith and the North Pole of the sky coincided. Seeing in the sky a mysterious still point over their heads had a profound significance. That polar center appeared as the summit of the world, the true paradise, the fixed seat of the supreme deity. And although the post-diluvian peoples scattered around the world over several millennia no longer saw that heaven, its memory had perpetuated as the true abode of God, the throne and palace of the creator. The religions of all ancient peoples confirmed this. By an incredible unanimous consensus they all associate the abode of the supreme god with the North Pole, "the center of heaven," or the celestial space above it. No one has ever clarified why this concordance, which seems obvious.

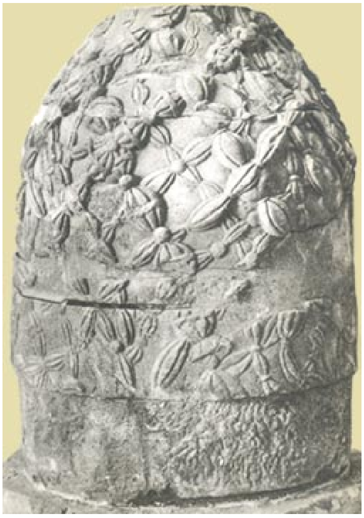
What did the Phoenicians, Etruscans and Romans think about it? The Phoenicians shared with the Asian peoples the idea of a mountain of the gods in the far north. For the Greeks we saw that Atlas stood at the north pole and that Olympus was yes the abode of the gods, but also the pillar of Atlas, depicted as a tall mountain that supported the sky. The Greeks prayed facing north, and from Homer we know that they addressed the Olympian gods by extending their hands "toward the starry sky"; Greek prayers, therefore, were directed toward the northern skies. This is confirmed by Plato's description of the "holy abode of Zeus," where the gods were summoned, "placed at the center of the world." That this center was the celestial pole is indicated beyond doubt by a passage from Servius Maurus Honoratus, known for his

Commentarii to the works of Virgil, where it is called the "*domicilium Jovis*," who informs us that the Etruscan and Roman augurs considered the thunder and lightning of the northern sky more significant than the others, being "higher up and closer to the abode of Jupiter."

Countries located to the north were also considered holier. The Romans believed that Britain was closer to heaven and holier than the Mediterranean countries. Varro and other Latin writers confirm this general idea, just as all modern commentators on ancient Etruscan religion agree in locating the abode of the gods of Etruria in the center of heaven, the northern circumpolar sky. The same idea was also shared by the Romans.

But what did the ancient Germans and Finns think about this? The pagan Germans, when they prayed and sacrificed to the gods, turned to the north. There, in the northern sky, at the top of Yggdrasil, the axis of the world, was the mythical city of Asgard, the abode of the Asians. The Edda specifically says that it had been erected "in" the center of the world. From there the whole world of men was always visible by day and night, and there stood Hlidskjálf, the high throne of Odin, who saw the whole earth from here. For the ancient Finns the supreme god was Ukko. In their mythology he was sometimes depicted supporting the firmament, like Atlas; and he was sometimes called Taivahan Napainen, the "navel of heaven." This nickname was given to him simply because he resided in the center of the sky. It reminds me of the petroglyph Quiva, mentioned by Bulloni (*I Discovered the Real Atlantis*) depicted on a flank of Mount Lovozero on the Kola Peninsula, which strangely (!) resembles Atlas. In the great Finnish epic poem, the Kalevala, the abode of the supreme God is called Tähtelä, which simply means the place of Tähti (polar star). Ancient peoples agree, not to say coincide, on this point. The simplest explanation is to assume that the cradle of humanity was located under the north pole .

Warren had analyzed the expression "navel of the earth," which appears in Plato, the Rig Veda, the Bible, and so many ancient literatures. It seems inexplicable how so many ancient mythologies connect the cradle of the human race with this navel-earth.



If we start with the assumption that the human race began its history at the pole, the mystery vanishes. The term "navel" was anciently used in many languages in the sense of "center," and the central point around which the constellations revolved was the navel of heaven. Corresponding the celestial pole to the terrestrial pole, it is natural that this was referred to as the "navel of the earth."

In Jerusalem, in the side of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher belonging to Greek-rite Christians, there is a round pillar, about two feet high, that would indicate the center of the world or the navel of the earth. Temples have always had, in all religions, a purpose of religious edification, taking their cue from often older beliefs.

The Capitol of Rome had first been the Mount of Saturn, and an affinity was noted between this hill of Rome and Mount Cronios of Olympia in terms of their religious traditions and origins (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Ῥωμαική ἀρχαιολογία, I, 34).

This Mount Cronios represented the Omphalos of the sacred city of Elis, the center of its primitive worship and sometimes received the name Olympus.

It is claimed that the Greeks and all ancient peoples were so ignorant as to believe that the earth was flat. Because of some expressions of Pindar and a passage from Pausanias, it has been claimed that for the ancient Greeks the exact center of the world was located in Delphi.

But while it is true that Delphi was referred to as the "Omphalos" of the earth, this was a copied designation, like the name of many cities in America named Rome, Athens, Venice, Santiago or Cordoba. We find traces of the term applied to Olympus, Ida, Parnassus, Ogygia, Delos, Athens, Crete, and even Meroe. Given the large number of "centers of the earth," it would seem that the original meaning of the expression has been lost. If we try to consider that the original 'Omphalos of the earth was located at the North Pole, everything becomes clear. The central stone of Delphi, like the Omphalium of the Cretans, becomes simply a sacred memorial, an attempt to copy the original. And all the various navels of the world turn out to be merely copies of a heavenly mount of the gods at the North Pole.

The island of Calypso, which Homer calls Omphalos of the sea, still takes us back to a mythical north. Its name Ogigia (= ancient, venerable, an extremely archaic toponym) connects with an antiquity that was remote even in Homer's time. On the islands Fær Øer rises a mountain named Høgoyggj, eerily reminiscent of that of the Homeric island, which makes Felice Vinci's hypothesis, which is discussed in another chapter, all the more plausible. It is worth mentioning here that Celtic traditions place the Land of Youth (Tir na-n Og) on a remote island (Cf. *The Warrior Orientalist. A Tribute to Pio Filippani-Ronconi*, edited by Angelo Iacovella). Og is interpreted as "youth," so it is the island of eternal youth.

However, Ogigia is' located in the far north, and Odysseus takes advantage of the Boreal wind to move away from its shores on his return journey. Queen Calypso (= dark, mysterious, concealing and hiding; name and meaning close to Kali, the black goddess of the Hindus), is the daughter of Atlas; and the correct location of Atlas, as already mentioned, is near the earth's pole. The beauty of the island was heavenly, full of groves and soft meadows of violets, so beautiful, in fact, that even an immortal would have been captivated by it. Finally, to identify the place beyond doubt, we have the fountain of Eden whose waters flow in four opposite streams. In Mount Meros we have the Greek form of the Hindu Meru, representing the navel of the earth. Perhaps the Egyptian Meroë (in some Egyptian texts Mer, in Assyrian Mirukh, or Mirukha), seat of the famous oracle of Jupiter Ammon, took its name from the same mountain of the world. And so would explain the passage in Quintus Curtius Rufus, which has stumped many commentators, in which the object that represented the divine being is described as resembling a "navel studded with gems" (*Id quod pro deo colitur, non eandem effigiam habet, quam vulgo diis accommodaverunt: umbilico maxime similis est habitus, smaragdo et gemmis coagmentatus*, Quintus Curtius, *Alexandri Magni, regis macedonum libri decem*, IV. 7, 23.).

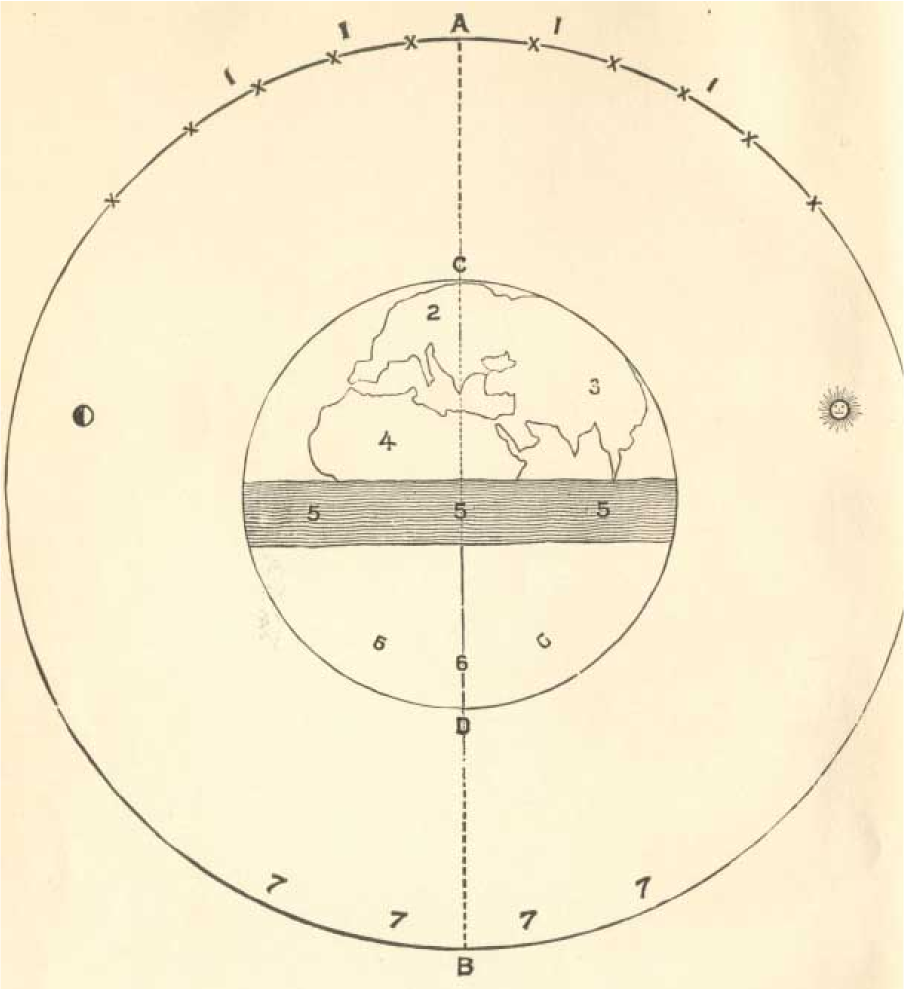
Apollo's real shrine was not in Delphi, but in that ancient land near the pole mentioned by Plato. The god lived among the Hyperboreans, in a land of almost perpetual light, and came to Delphi only once a year. This quotation has created more than one perplexity for Pindar's interpreters. According to Hecataeus of Miletus, Apollo's mother Leto and his sister Artemis were born on an island in the Arctic Ocean, beyond the Boreal wind. Moreover, on this island inhabited by the Hyperboreans, Apollo was worshipped incessantly in a huge round temple (perhaps the island in the White Sea mentioned by Marco Bulloni in his *Ho scoperto la vera Atlantide*?), in a city where the inhabitants perpetually played lyres and sang praises to him. In Phaedo we find a fascinating description of Plato's earthly paradise. In this magical region everything is more beautiful than in any other place; the hills are strewn with stones more resplendent than our emeralds and sardonyxes and jaspers, in comparison with which our gems are only pebbles: there all stones are precious. The climate of the seasons is such that the inhabitants have no diseases and live much longer and have all the senses sharper than ours. They have temples and sacred places where the gods really dwell, and they hear their voices and receive their answers and converse and see the sun, moon and stars as they really are. If we are to look for the location of this divinely beautiful place, all indications in the text agree. Seen from the point of view of Greece and neighboring lands it is "above," that is, it is "the upper earth," the summit of the world, the navel of the earth, μεσογαία, inhabited by happy men. All other navels of the earth would thus be only memories of the primordial one. Thus we can understand the meaning of the navel of the earth in Jerusalem mentioned above. The small pillar in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher goes far beyond the alleged ignorance of the geography of the medieval age. It symbolizes, like all such pillars, the fabled mountain on whose summit the heavens were hinged, and around which all heavenly bodies rotated incessantly. It passes on a religious symbolism that existed in that region long before Jerusalem became the Jewish capital, reminding our modern world of the concept of *tabbur haaretz* (navel of the world) from a time before the days of Samuel.

But let us return to Homer's worldview. Unfortunately, modern scholars have failed to interpret the cosmology of the ancients correctly. Our Homeric world maps present the earth as a round dish surrounded by the Ocean, while the sky would have been a kind of metal lid on which the supernal gods lived. It is not surprising, then, that the land of other ancient peoples was interpreted to correspond to the same alleged concept of the earth. An assumption that appears unfounded and misleading, for Egyptians, Akkadians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Phoenicians, Hebrews, Greeks, Iranians, Hindus, Chinese, Japanese-in short, all ancient peoples-had possessed similar cosmologies, far more advanced than those attributed to them by moderns.

In ancient thought, the world was divided into four major parts: the abode of the gods, the abode of the living, the abode of the dead and the abode of demons.

To locate their relative positions, one must imagine the earth as a spheroid at the center of the starry sphere, with its axis perpendicular and the north pole at the top. The pole star is thus the true zenith, at the center of the divine abode. According to this conception in the northern hemisphere of the earth is the home of the living; in the southern hemisphere is the abode of the disembodied and ruling spirits of the dead; and, finally, the region around the south pole is 'hell. And the two hemispheres of the earth were also conceived as separated from each other by the Ocean River, an equatorial current. To illustrate this worldview, let us see the diagram below offered by Warren. The two circles represent the spherical earth and around the spheres of stars, respectively. A is the north pole of the sky, at the zenith. B is the south pole of the sky at nadir. Line A B is the apparent axis of revolution of the starry sky at perpendicular position. C is the north pole of the earth; D the south pole; line CD the axis of the earth at perpendicular position and coincident with the corresponding portion of the axis of the starry sky. Space 1 1 1 1 is the abode of divinity; 2, Europe; 3, Asia; 4, Libya, or the known part of Africa; 5 5 5, the ocean; 6 6 6, the abode of disembodied spirits and rulers of the dead; 7 7 7 7, the 'hell. Now, to define Homeric cosmology, we need only write in place of 1 1 1 "Abode of Olympus"; in place of 5 5 5, "Ocean"; in place of 6 6 6, "Houses of Hades" ; and in place of 7 7 7, "gloomy Tartarus." Let us imagine the light descending from the upper sky, so the lower terrestrial hemisphere always remains in shadow; let us imagine Tartarus filled with gloom and darkness, which has become a prison for ousted deities and evil powers; let us assume the sun, moon and stars rotating silently around the central vertical axis of the illuminated hemispheres, and all the supposed contradictions of classical cosmology suddenly disappear. This is the world in which Homer lived and sang. There is no longer the dark cliff in Thessaly, from which Zeus threatens to hang all the earth and ocean. Here the Hyperboreans can exist and one can descend to the underworld. Dozens of commentators racked their brains trying to explain how the houses of Hades could be at the same time over the ocean and under the earth. With this new view this difficulty disappears. Interpreters of the Odyssey found it impossible to understand the contradictory directions Odysseus took, trying to circumscribe his journey to the Mediterranean. Now instead we can think of an account of an imaginary circumnavigation of the earth from the northern to the southern hemisphere and a visit to the θαλάσσης ὀμφαλὸς, or north pole. The cosmological conception of the vertical axis of the world is often conceived poetically as a majestic pillar, supporting the heavens like a pivot on which they revolve. Euripides and Aristotle unquestionably identify the pillar of Atlas with this axis of the world. The entire upper hemisphere would be conceived of as rising on all sides from the equatorial ocean toward the pole, so nothing would be more natural than to imagine the upper half of the earth as a great mountain, the mother of all mountains; once the abode of the supreme deity was conceived above the summit of the earth, it would be extremely easy to imagine the abode of the gods on the summit of this stupendous mountain, far away, above the clouds. This is precisely what happened in the cosmology of different ancient peoples by indicating by various, but always easily recognizable names, this "Mountain of the World," at the north pole of the earth, connection with the city of the Gods, which is also the 'axis around which the sun, moon and stars revolve. We often find that the lower hemisphere was conceived as an inverted mountain, at the antipodes of the Mountain of the Gods and connected at its apex with the abode of the demons.

It might be interesting to see what various ancient peoples thought about it, even far from northern Europe.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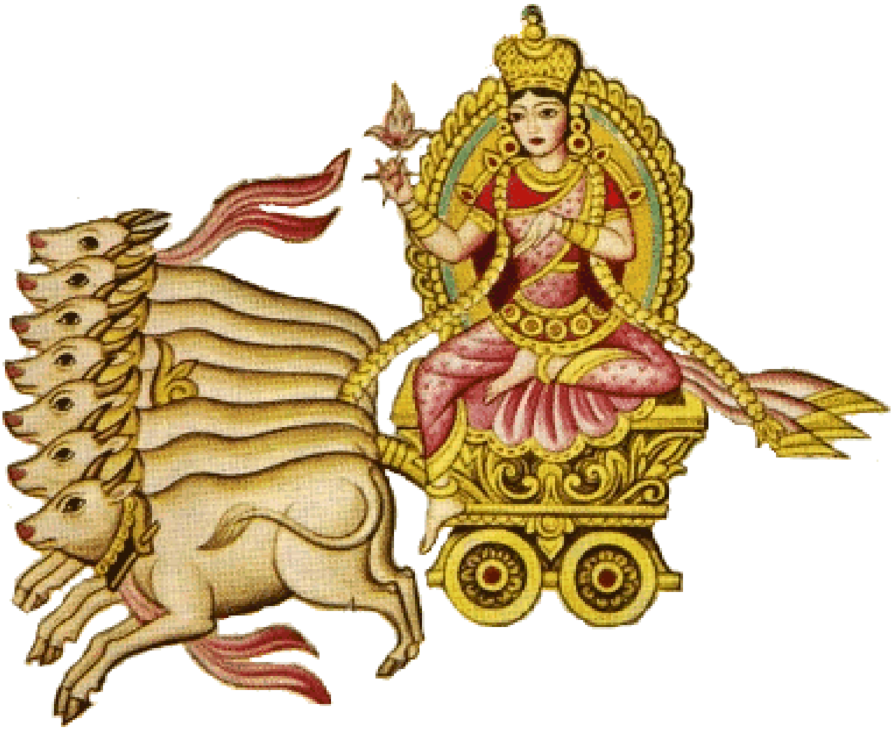
AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM INDIA

India has two million gods, and it worships them all.
In religion, other nations are miserable;
India is the only millionaire.

- Mark Twain

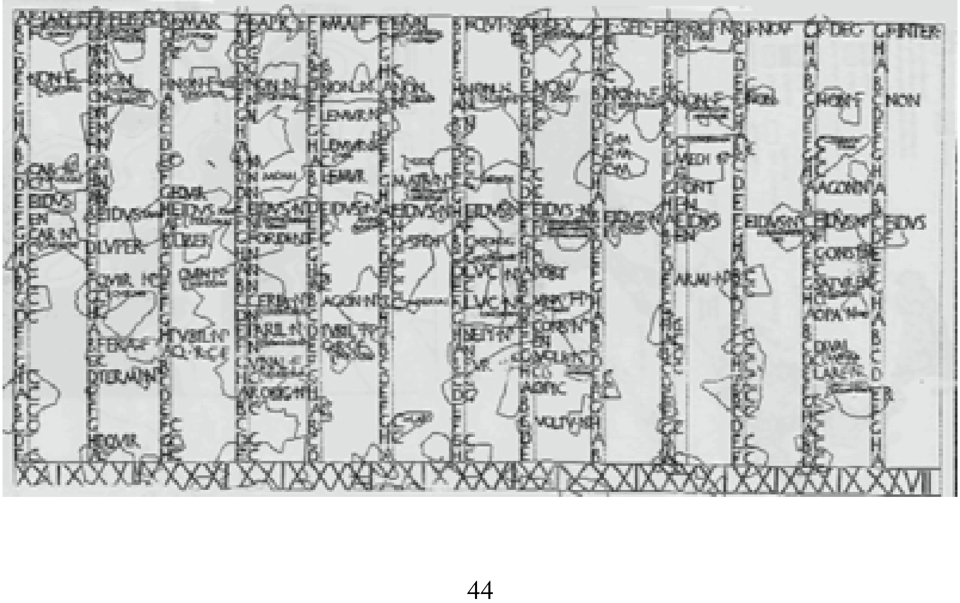
Straddling the publication of Warren's text were two important books by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a Hindu scholar and politician, one of India's founding fathers, a person of great spiritual stature, and a profound connoisseur of Sanskrit and the Vedas. The first book was *The Orion, or researches into the antiquity of the Vedas* in 1893, and the second *The Arctic Home in the Vedas* in 1903. Fortunately for my readers, these books have recently been translated and published in Italian, so they will not be forced to sit through another river chapter, being able to document themselves directly. For those who have not read them and are so intellectually lazy that they do not want to read them (in which case I doubt that they have reached these lines), I will allow myself to briefly summarize their conclusions. The *Vedas* are a corpus of ancient Sanskrit texts, handed down initially by oral tradition, mostly in the form of poetic texts. The name itself, *Veda*, means Knowledge (cf. Sanskrit *Vidya*, Latin *Videre*, Avestic *Vaedha*, Celtic *Fetar*). This corpus would have originated with a people, the Aryans, who had invaded India around 2200 B.C. coming from an area corresponding to present-day Afghanistan. At the same time another part of this people, the Iranians, had separated coming from the same area and invaded present-day Iran, founding there a culture that was later partly collected in the *Avesta*, which shows singular similarities with the *Vedas*. *The Vedas* have a complex structure, showing that they were composed over a very long period of time. At least some of the hymns were composed before the arrival of the Aryans in India, as can be deduced from various details.

Tilak notes, quoting Prof. Geikie, a distinguished Scottish geologist, that the presence of man had been detected in the interglacial period, when "the climate was characterized by clement winters and cool summers, so that tropical plants and animals, such as elephants, rhinos, hippos, spread over the entire Arctic region and, in spite of the numerous ferocious carnivores, Paleolithic man did not have an unpleasant dwelling there." This is regardless of the causes of the succession of ice ages with intervals of more temperate climate. Considering that the seabed, north of Siberia, is 200 meters deep, a relatively modest difference in water level would have been enough for now submerged seabeds to emerge. Showing great appreciation for Warren's work, however, Tilak must point out that the American scholar, like all Westerners, was dependent on translations of the *Vedas*. In contrast, Hindu specialists had the distinct advantage of direct knowledge of the Vedic texts, which were written in a partly obsolete idiom and thus difficult to interpret. Assuming that there is no evidence that the earth's poles have changed position, they are reminded of the existence of the precession of the equinoxes, which causes a shift of the celestial poles, that is, of the image of the starry sky that could be had from a polar zone. When some passages of the *Vedas* took shape, the spring equinox fell in the constellation of Orion; later, in somewhat less ancient Vedic texts, this equinox was in the constellation of the Pleiades (in Sanskrit *Krittika*). From here a Vedic chronology can be reconstructed. The constellation Orion, so named by the Greeks around 400 B.C., corresponded to the Sumerian constellation of Gu.An.Na, the celestial Bull killed by Gilgamesh. The Sumerians had named it so around 4400 B.C. But according to astronomers this constellation, whatever it was called, indicated the spring equinox about 10,000 B.C. From the precession of the equinoxes it follows that the earth, turning like a spinning top, makes a complete 360-degree turn in about 25,800 years, taking opposite inclinations every 12,900 years or so. Tilak, too, insists that for an observer placed at the north pole, the celestial vault would appear to be rotating around him and the center of the sky would be identified with the celestial north pole, so the sun, entering the northern hemisphere, would appear from the south, rising only once a year. However, the darkness of the polar night does not last uninterruptedly for six months: it will be mitigated by the moon, which is above the horizon for 15 consecutive days, showing its phases in succession; then there are the northern lights with their phantasmagorical glows; but above all there are the dawn and twilight, both visible for several days, and refraction, which makes the night much less dark. Ultimately the night or rather the period of darkness is reduced to about two months. The memory of the polar sunrises has remained in the Aryan peoples, with the light spreading moving in a circle, changing from pearly white to bright pink to deep red. Progressively descending from the pole, not all stars are visible, some rise and set, and sunrises and twilights are shorter and less spectacular. All these features are described in Vedic literature, where a solar calendar appears that proves the astronomical knowledge of the *rishis*, the cantors of the *Vedas*. A 30-day lunar month and a 12-month year are shown, with an intercalary period. This calendar dates back to the period of the Pleiades. The position of the equinoxes was also noted, which makes it easier to verify the antiquity of the texts. The above calendar is also typical of a temperate zone. However, the *Vedas* are not a chronologically stratified work; instead, data and elements from different, more or less ancient periods are mixed together. In fact we can find passages from the same post-Vedic literature in which the motion of the sky is likened to a wheel turning on its axis as a reminder of the movement of the sky as seen from the pole. In Hindu texts Mount Meru is the pole and here the day and night of the gods each last six months and the sun rises only once. A year of mortals corresponds to a day and night of the gods (Herodotus also says in IV, 25 "on those mountains dwell goat-footed men, and farther still, other men who sleep six months," evidently alluding to the polar nights). On Meru the sun, moon and stars turn from left to right. Meru shines and illuminates the night (perhaps the northern lights are mentioned). On the other hand, the year-long day of the gods also appears among the ancient Greeks, and the long night of the gods corresponds to the Norse *Götterdämmerung*, after which life will begin again. In the *Vedas* we find as many as three hundred references to Ushas, the goddess of dawn, always described with great care. The hymns dedicated to her are among the finest in the Vedas, and they point out with absolute clarity a much longer duration of the aurora than we know in temperate zones, divided into several successive moments of increasing glow. In short, a long and continuous polar aurora that lasts for many days. An aurora that rises not from a single point on the earth, but from the entire horizon, like a wheel that spins for 30 days. These characteristics of the goddess Ushas are all typical of sunrise at the Arctic pole.



There is one difference to highlight, however: the polar sunrise lasts 45 to 60 days, while that of the Vedas lasts only 30 days. Perhaps in ancient times, for climatic reasons, it turned out to be shorter, or, much more likely, the primordial observer was not exactly at the north pole, but at a slightly lower latitude. Since the aurora thus described is typically polar, the *rishis* must have witnessed it in preglacial times, and traces of it are found in Vedic hymns. One hints at an era "long past," in another at "very ancient" times.How can we fail to recall Eos, the Homeric Aurora "with rosy fingers"? The *Rig-Veda* often speaks of the long, dark night, similar to the "darkness of a well," a "sunless darkness," in which Asura Vrithra battles Deva Indra, lord of storms and thunderbolts. This myth is strangely reminiscent(?) of the Hittite myth of Teshub, god of storms, fighting and overcoming the dragon Eluy-anka (the guardian of El or Elohim), and that of Zeus against Typhon. But let us not digress. Vedic bards often invoke the gods to deliver them from the "long darkness" and make the sun reappear. Which makes much more sense talking about a polar night than a normal one, especially remembering that in ancient times the priests feared that dawn would never come again. A fear so strong around 2500 B.C. that it necessarily had to go back to primordial times. There are also other numerous references to the length of day and night, typical of the Arctic region, but these would require too lengthy and painstaking a philological analysis. Looking at the calendar, it was noted that it was that of the temperate zones, however, searching through the *Vedas* one finds traces of an older calendar of Arctic origin, stemming from the conservatism of the priests, who had among other things the task of keeping the fire of the sacrifices burning, a widespread practice in antiquity. While in more recent times there were twelve annual sacrificial periods, in the Arctic period they should have been fewer in number, equal to the months of sunlight. Depending on their distance from the pole, Indo-Aryan peoples could have a number of months varying from seven to eleven.

The sacrificial period was when the sun shone. It was considered a 30-day aurora, implying a sunlight period of no more than seven months and a long night of 4-5 months. The seven Devah Aditya, the seven suns, appear in the Vedic texts. And the sun itself is described as a chariot with seven wheels, drawn by seven bai horses (bay is the color of the primal horses) and is described as having seven shining rays. An eighth Aditya is also mentioned, named Martanda, who was discarded (presumably because he was stillborn). However, in the post-Vedic literature, thus more recent, there is mention of twelve Aditya, clearly referring to the twelve months. The seven suns are the seven months of light in the circumpolar area, while the eighth represents a long month of darkness. The succession of seasons in the far north could not be depicted in clearer form. The very name of the eighth month is derived from "*marta*" (Sanskrit death) and "*anda*" (in Sanskrit bird, egg); it speaks of the death of the sun disappearing for a long period below the horizon. However, evidence can be found in the *Vedas*, in addition to those mentioned, of annual ceremonial calendars of nine and ten months. In short, in very ancient times the period of sacrifices, based on the presence of the sun, lasted from seven to ten months, until the long night. Vestiges of this ancient calendar are still present even in Europe, where the last month of the year is generally named after the Latin *december* (corresponding to the Sanskrit *dasha vara*, i.e., tenth period), recalling quotations from Plutarch and Macrobius that Numa Pompilius added two months to the ancient Roman calendar, previously 304 days long. An ancient Roman calendar dating back to 60 B.C. is given here in which the months *quintilis* and *sextilis* can still be detected.



The Vedas also tell of the black and white cows representing the days and nights; in Greek mythology we find the 350 oxen and 350 rams of Helios. But in India the story was told both of how the cows got their horns in ten months and that they were stolen by Vritra, which reminds us of Hercules' cows kidnapped by Cacus. Symbolism of how part of the days of the year were taken away from the light. When Homer tells that Odysseus' companions had devoured the oxen of Helios, he means to tell us that they had destroyed their days. And to Indra was applied the epithet *of shata-manyu* or *shata-kratu*, lord of a hundred sacrifices, which reminds us of the Greek slaughter, sacrifice of a hundred oxen. Also sung in the *Vedas* are the exploits of the Ashvini (horse tamers), a pair of twins, physicians of the gods, morning deities, bringers of the dawn. As physicians, they had the power to heal the Sun, weakened in winter, bringing it back to the vigor of spring. This was after the disappearance of the sun at the winter solstice in the circumpolar areas. They were the equivalent of the Dioscuri, sons of Zeus in the form of the northern swan, argonauts in search of the solar Golden Fleece (think of the constellation Aries); like the Ashvini they were identified with the constellation Gemini. And the Ashvini were depicted with the head of a horse, while the Dioscuri were considered great horsemen. All random combinations? The Hindu scholar then also dwells on the similarities found between the *Vedas* and the *Avesta*, the ancient Iranian sacred text. But I reserve the right to check the *Avesta*'s adherence to these polar theories at another point. Here we will instead mention the chronology of the Vedas according to Tilak, which brings the antiquity of the Vedic civilization to 4500 B.C. on the basis of astronomical data. It turns out that there was an interchange of data and information on the subject between Hindus and Greeks. The latter had a great appreciation for Hindu astronomy (cf. Lucius Flavius Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*), while Garga Muni, one of the great sages of the *Puranas* (collections of ancient histories), appreciated the astronomical expertise of the Yawana (Ionians i.e., Greeks). Chinese astronomy, whose antiquity is proven by texts dating back to 2357 B.C. (with the spring equinox in the Pleiades), drew on passages from undoubtedly older Vedic works, since at the time of the *Rig-Veda* that equinox was in Orion, thus in even earlier times.

Tilak's great advantage lay in his erudition and deep knowledge of the language of the Vedas. The chronological pattern resulting from his studies was this:

10,000 - 8,000 B.C. beginning of the glacial period and destruction of the Arctic home

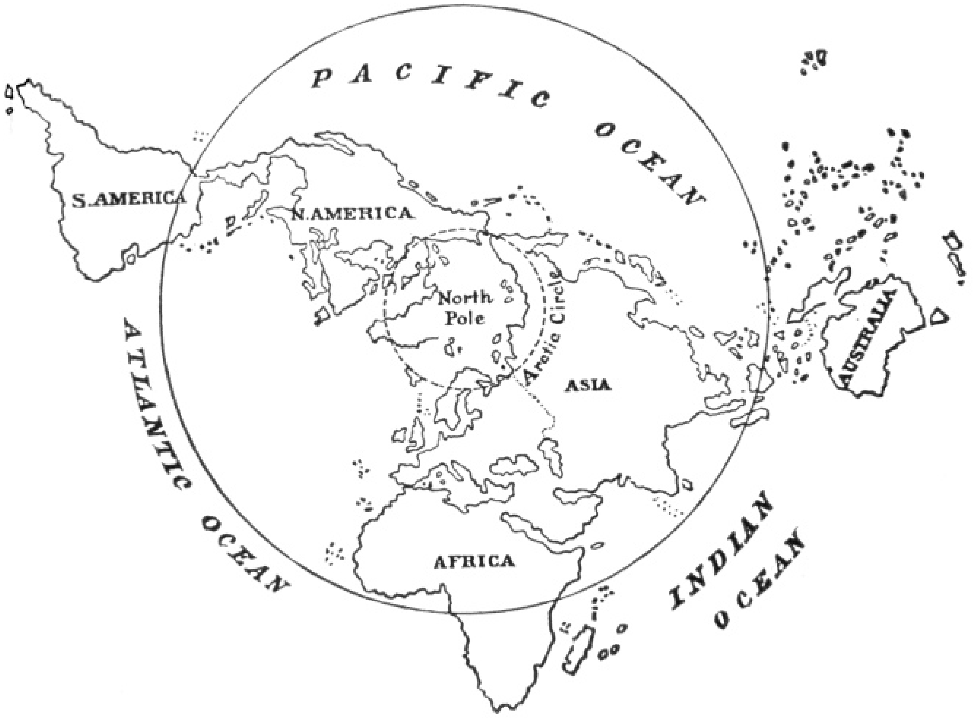
8,000 - 5,000 period of the great migrations, before the constellation Orion entered the spring equinox

5,000 - 3000 Orion period in the equinox

3000 - 1400 period of the Pleiades (*Krittika*) in the equinox

1400 - 500 pre-Buddhist period

And as for the shape of the earth, we are told over and over again in the Hindu *Puranas* that the earth is a sphere, and that Mount Meru is its navel or axis. But the expression *nâbhi*, or "navel" of the earth, is more archaic than the *Puranas*, although the meaning of *Purana* is "ancient." The term "navel of heaven" is found in the oldest hymns of the *Vedas*. But where was the sacred shrine so named? No such sacred place is found in either Bactrian or Punjab. Nothing suggests we locate it in India. On the other hand, the fifth stanza of hymn one hundred and eighty-five, the first mandala of the *Rig Veda*, seems to place it clearly at the North Pole. In this verse Day and Night are represented as twin sisters in the bosom of their parents, Heaven and Earth; each alternating with the other, but both simultaneously kissing the *nâbhi* of the earth. Well, nowhere on earth, except in the polar regions, Night and Day always seem to override each other. Never are they found together. At the Pole, and only there, it may be said, can they, circling together around a common point with their arms laced together, kiss it from opposite sides. This is clearly the poet's meaning, recalling all the legendary splendors of the polar mountain around which Sun and Moon are always moving.

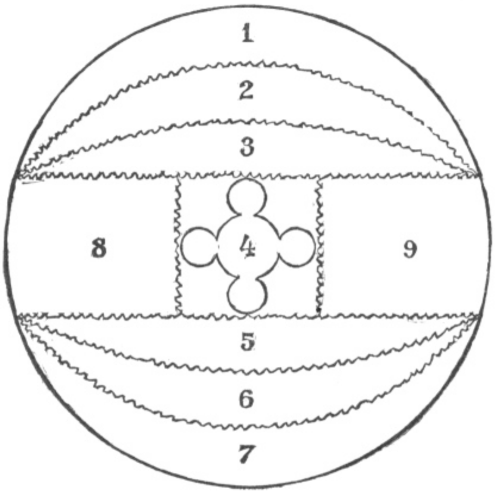


THE NAVEL OF THE EARTH.

We find the bard in perfect agreement, in another hymn, asking where the navel of the earth is; and he does so by referring not to some central shrine in his land, but to the extreme "end of the earth," an expression often used, in ancient languages, to designate the pole and neighboring areas. Again, in another Vedic passage, the navel of the earth is located on the "Mountains," and this designation takes us north. But further evidence of its polar location is found in other hymns, where the pillar of heaven, the equivalent in Vedic cosmology of the pillar of Atlas, is described as resting on the navel of the earth. So evident is the Vedic exposition on this subject that one writer (Marius Fontane, "*Inde Védique*"), after claiming that the cosmography of the *Vedas* was "embryonic," and their earth a "flat disk" topped by a solid firmament, "welded to the edge of the disk at the horizon," later, however, in his study of one of the cosmogonic hymns of Dīrghatamas, the son of Mamata, he comes to the conclusion that the declaimer had knowledge of the earthly and celestial poles, and, in trying to answer the question concerning the place of origin of humanity, he locates it precisely at the point of contact between the polar mountain and the pole of the northern sky.

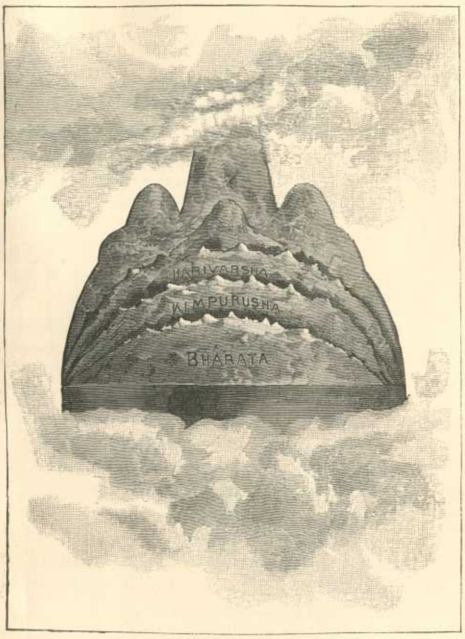
The Hindu equivalent of the axis of the world, Mount Meru, is represented planted so deeply in the globe that the Antarctic or Hell Mountain is only a projection of its lower end. And this is where the demons or Asuras have their abode, as stated in the Hindu astronomy text *Sûrya Siddhânta*.

Let us now consider one of the oldest geographical treatises compiled by India, the *Vishnu Puranas*. Taking it as if it were a travel guide, we begin by looking at the Indian Ocean. To begin with the division among the gods of the different quadrants of the world, this belongs to Yama, the god of the dead: "May he, whose hands wield the thunder, be in the East your protection and shield; may Yama's protection help in the South, Varuna's arm defend the West, and Kuvera, Lord of Gold, constantly protect the North."



The Earth of the Hindus, viewed from **above**.

1. Uttarakuru.
2. Hiranmâya.
3. Ramyâka.
5. Harivarsha.
6. Kimpurusha.
7. Bhârata (India).
8. Ketumâlâ.
9. Bhadrâsva.
4. Su-meru in Ilâvrita.



THE EARTH OF THE HINDUS.
Side View of Upper Hemisphere.

Interpreting the ancient cosmology, south is the direction of descent, north is ascent (*uttarāt*); south is downward (*adharāt*), thus Yama's abode and kingdom is not only in the south, but also below the level of India i.e., in the southern hemisphere, where the "lower world" is located. All Hindu literature is full of such references. In this direction we would look in vain for a paradise. Going up northward we first find the Himalayan range, the Himavat of Indian geography.

All that portion of land between this mountain range and the great ocean to the south constitutes one of the nine *varshas* or divisions of the upper habitable hemisphere. Its name is Bhârata.

If our ancient Hindus could now proceed northward and cross the Himavat, which is impossible for mortals, they would find themselves in Kimpurusha, an equally wide, but higher and more beautiful *varsha*, which extends northward until it is bounded by a second chain of incredibly high mountains, the Himakuta. Continuing further northward and passing Himakuta, one arrives in Harivarsha, an even higher and more divine country. This in turn extends close to another range, Nishadha, through which one would have reached Ilâvrita, the central *varsha*, which occupies the highest part and center of the world. No one can adequately describe the beauty of this country. In the center stands the Mountain of the Gods, the beautiful Meru.

It is the axis around which all the constellations in the sky revolve. It is the center of the habitable world.

Continuing our imaginary journey through the divine country of Ilâvrita, crossing this colossal central mountain, we should now begin to descend on the meridian opposite to the one on which we ascended. The boundary of the central region on that side is the Nila chain, then comes the *varsha* of Ramyâka; its farthest boundary is the Sweta chain, beyond which is Hiranmâya; descending further we cross the chain that bounds it on the far side, the Sringin, and we are in Uttarakuru, the last of the seven great divisions of the earth, the one corresponding, as a distance from Meru, to Bhârata, that is, our starting point.

And, of course, it is on the equatorial ocean, and here we also have to cross this ocean in order to reach the underworld.

The manner in which the *varshas* are conceived in the number of nine, subdividing the great central cross-section of the hemispheric surface, leaves Ilâvrita in the form of a perfect square at the top of the globe; the land decreasing eastward to the sea is called Bhadrâsva and the corresponding country to the west is called Ketumâlâ. To assist the reader and offer him a clearer conception of this sacred geography we give here two images reported by Warren, one of which presents in broad outline a polocentric plane projection of its upper hemisphere and the other the lateral aspect of the earth according to the Puranas.

Having seen now what the world was according to the ancient Hindus, let us try to understand what their ideas were about the cradle of humanity. For them, the origin of man proceeded from Mount Meru.

In the Puranas this mountain is described such a wealth of mythical features that one finds it hard to believe that it has any relation to reality. To follow these descriptions one would have to imagine oneself in the center of a vast elevated plain, surrounded by various mountain ranges, with a gigantic block, the axis of the world, rising toward the highest point of the heavens, on the summit of which, at the north pole, is the divine Gangâ, the source of all rivers, leading to an ideal lake, the Mânasa-Sârovara.

Meru, then, is at the same time the highest part of the earthly world and the central point of the visible sky; it is also the north pole and the center of the habitable earth, Jambu-dwîpa, literally the continent of the Jambu tree, the tree of life, which appears in all traditions (as we shall see later). Gangâ circles Meru seven times descending from the abode of the Seven Rishi to then fill the four lakes placed on four vertices adjacent to this huge pyramid. Fed by Gangâ's heavenly waters, the four lakes in turn feed four earthly rivers that drain through the mouths of four symbolic animals. These four great rivers drain into four opposite seas to the east, south, west and north. The four lakes, the four rivers and the four oceans are composed of different liquids, corresponding to the four castes, to which all the earth's inhabitants belong. Many have tried in vain to identify Meru with some mountain in Central Asia.

Let us take a look at the sky-born river Gangâ. The *Vedas* call it "the river of the three worlds," since it flows through heaven, earth and the underworld. In ancient times the source of the waters was believed to be located in the highest heaven (*paramam vyoman*), the region particularly sacred to Varuna.

In the *Mahâbhârata* the spring is inserted into the sky of Vishnu, high above the pole star (Druva). In their descent, the ethereal waters wash the pole star, the seven Rishi (Ursa Major), and polar pin of the moon, and then fall back on the top of Mount Meru. "On the summit of Meru," says the *Vishnu Purana*, "stands ... the vast city of Brahma, enclosed by the river Gangâ, which from the feet of Vishnu and washing the moon, falls here [on the summit of Meru] from the sky and, after encircling the city, divides into four mighty rivers, flowing in opposite directions. These rivers are Sítá, Alakanandá, Chaksu and Bhadrá. The former, which flows down the east side of Meru, flows over the ridges and through the Bhadráswa country to the ocean. The Alakanandá flows south into Bhárata country, then divides into seven rivers and reaches the sea. The Chaksu flows into the sea after crossing all the western mountains, passing through Ketumála. And the Bhadrá bathes the country of Uttarakurus and flows into the northern sea."

As in all traditions, the four rivers are born at the apex of the earth, at the pole.

That the Indo-Aryans had the same idea as other ancient peoples is also evidenced by the laws of Manu. For them Yama, similar to the Iranian Yima, was the first man. His first abode was at the north pole, and after his death he became a god, the guardian of the south pole, where the region of the dead lies. But even though the Hindus no longer associated him with the north at the time of the writing of the *Vedas*, they understood well that the primitive Eden stood in Ilâvrita, around the polar Meru, where the deities reside and there is only one day and one night per year. This says the Code of Manu: "a year of mortals is a day and a night of the gods, regents of the universe seated around the north pole; and again their division is this: the day is the northern part and their night the southern course of the sun." Similarly, in the *Sûrya Siddhânta* we read, "Gods see the sun, after it has risen, for a year and a half."

Equally unmistakable is what is written in the *Rig Veda*, probably India's oldest work: "The northern path of the sun is a day with the gods. The southern path of the sun is (with them) a night. A year is (with them) a day and a night."

This strange concept becomes perfectly clear and understandable if we take it for granted that the ancient fathers and first regents of the human race originally dwelt at the North Pole, and then over time became the object of worship in the imaginations of successive generations

The sacred tree also appears in most Buddhist sculptures. An example of elaborate representation can be seen in the famous Sanchi Stupa. An inconspicuous feature of it has often puzzled observers.

Almost invariably at the top of the tree is a small umbrella. So one is surprised when this is missing.

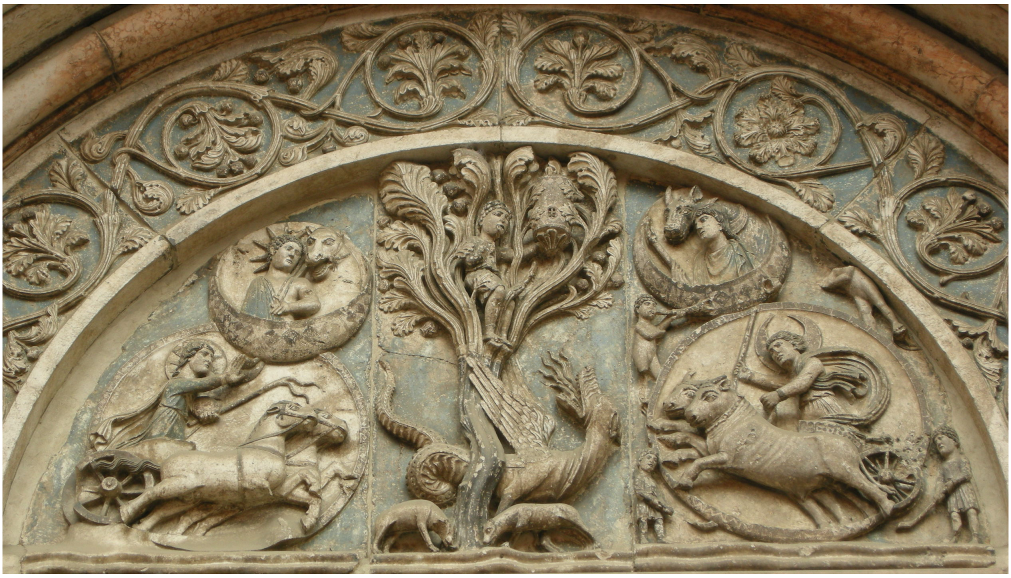
This small symbol has a curious meaning. In Buddhist mythological art, the umbrella symbolizes the northern polar sky of the gods, and by connecting it to the tip of the sacred tree, the ancient sculptors showed without a shadow of a doubt its cosmic character and axis function.

But this cosmic tree was the mythical tree of wisdom, the tree of enlightenment "under which it was arranged that truth should come to Buddha." Its location is "in the center of the earth."

Buddha had to pass over the heavenly water to reach Nirvana, which is the land of the tree of life and knowledge, but he could not cross to the other side; then the tree spirit stretched out its branches and helped him. Thus Buddha reached the summit of wisdom.

This is the tree of Nirvana, which is always the same tree of the pole and paradise, of the Jewish Eden, of the Hindu Jambu-dwîpa. The ancient Germans called their world tree Irminsul, meaning pillar of heaven, a mythical expression of the idea of the axis of the world. And perhaps our Christmas fir, the tree of cuccagna and the tree of liberty of the French Revolution are its heirs.

The myth had deeply affected medieval Christian art, as can be seen in many places, such as in the marble bas-relief in the lunette above the south portal of the Baptistery of Parma. This very fine work by Benedetto Antelami depicts the legend of Barlaam, a subject of clear Buddhist inspiration: it shows a man in a tree threatened by a dragon, the symbol of sin. On the tree, however, there is also a honeycomb, perhaps representing the salvation offered by baptism. Around it are depictions of time (the sun and moon personifying day and night).



The 'ancient Indian conception of the decay of the world from era to era is expressed in the "Laws of Manu." The cycle of one manifestation of the manifested world is manvantara, divided into four yugas, each of shorter duration than the previous one. Of the four great eras of life in the 'present universe, we are living in the last and worst. In the first *yuga* all men were holy; in the present they are all absolutely corrupt and vile. In the first they were high and long-lived; in each successive age they have become worse and weaker. I will not elaborate on this complex subject, for which I refer to specialized studies.

In the *Rig Veda*, referring to the celestial north pole, we read *nâ´bhim amṛ́tasya* (navel of heaven). Identical or similar expressions are often encountered in Vedic literature. Instead, the expression *nâ´bhir pṛthivyâ´s* (navel of the earth) denotes the earth's north pole. These are the most sacred places in heaven and earth, respectively. Poor knowledge of Sanskrit and Hindu religion evidently prevented translators and interpreters from grasping the true meaning.

In Buddhism, heir and preserver of so many of India's ancient ideas, the very notion of an axis of the world with its center in the celestial pole has been maintained. Very curiously, if we follow the authority of the *Lalitavistara* (the Buddha's Book of Games), the actions and words attributed to the infant Buddha upon his arrival in our world unmistakably identify north with the abode of the gods and his nadir with the abode of demons. Even the modern heirs of the aboriginal non-Aryan tribes of India, such as the Gonds, have retained this ancient belief. Each Buddhist temple built according to orthodoxy symbolically represents the divine regions of Meru and the Heaven of Saints. The thirteen pyramidal levels at the top of each temple in Nepal represent the thirteen heavens of Amitâbha, the celestial Buddha of the Mahayana school. Buddhists in Ceylon attempted to transform their central Mount, Dêva-Kuta (Mount of the Gods), into Meru by finding the four streams corresponding to the rivers of their paradise. In the temples of Ellora, in the Indian subcontinent, we have, in a similar way, a complete representation of Shiva's paradise. Every pagoda, every pyramid, every sacred high place, are invariably considered a copy of the sacred Mount Meru, paradise of the Hindus. It was mentioned earlier that Tilak found several points of connection between the traditions recorded in the Vedas and the Iranian traditions handed down from the Avesta. It now becomes incumbent to discuss them.

THE AVESTA

The sun enters everywhere,

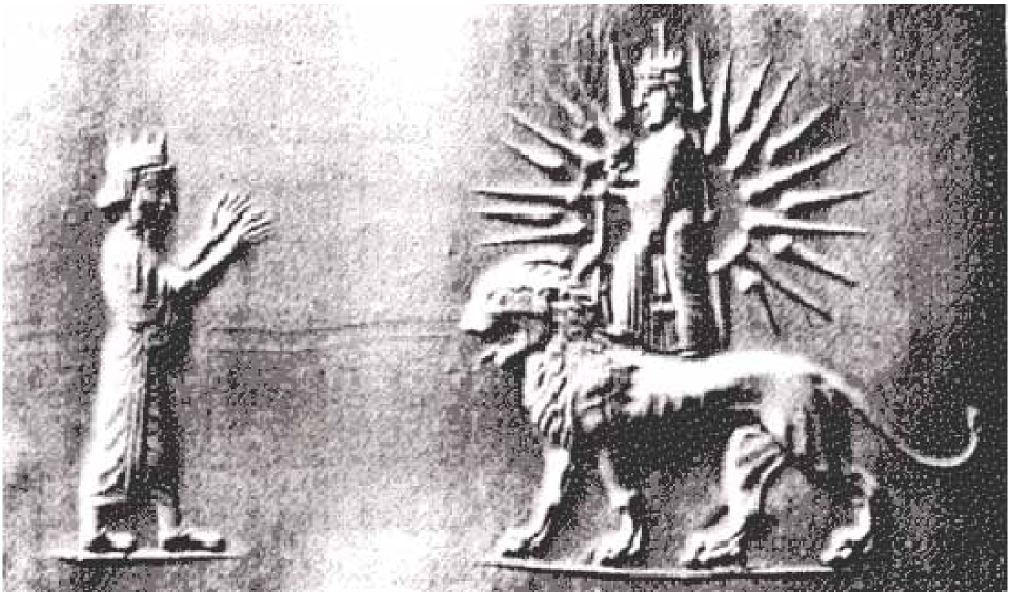
But it never gets dirty.

- Diogenes the Cynic

The texts of the *Avesta*, which are all in the Avestan language, an ancient Iranian used only in these texts and now long regarded as a sacred language, were composed over hundreds and perhaps thousands of years. The most important part, the *Gathas*, is believed to have been composed by Zarathushtra himself, but there are parts believed to be older. These texts would seem to be part of a much larger literature, as Pliny the Elder had suggested in his *Naturalis Historia*, where he relates that the Greek writer Hermippus of Smyrna "had interpreted two million verses of Zoroaster," as the Greeks had translated his name. Those that have survived the millennia, the wars, the fires of Persepolis and Alexandria, are only a part of the ancient texts and are mainly liturgical, having been saved through the oral transmission of the priests. Over the centuries, starting from the 3rd century of our era, interpretations and commentaries have been added. There are strong linguistic and cultural similarities between the texts of the *Avesta* and those of the *Vedas*, suggesting that common proto-Indo-Iranic beliefs are reflected in them, predating the independent evolution that occurred after the separation of the two human groups. Zoroastrianism appears to be the oldest revealed religion in the world, which then influenced the later ones, from individual judgment to the future resurrection of the flesh, from heaven to hell, from final judgment to the reunion of body with soul. Unfortunately, today only perhaps a fourth part of the Avestic texts remains, originally twelve volumes or perhaps twenty-one, some of which were already lost with the burning of Persepolis by Alexander the Great and then disappeared almost entirely with the Islamic invasion of 640 e.v.

A very brief mention of this religion, without elaboration that would not come to interest the already tried and exhausted reader: The supreme being is called Ahura Mazda, which means "wise Lord." Ahura Mazda created the world and all good things, including humans. He opposes Anghra Mainyu ("destructive spirit"), who is the embodiment of evil and creator of all evil. The cosmic battle between the two forces will eventually lead to the elimination of all evil. Prophet Zarathushtra founded this religion at a still uncertain date, which is assumed to be around 1200 B.C. While living in the steppes of Central Asia, he is said to have received his revelations directly from Ahura Mazda and his Archangels (*Amesha Spentas*). The most sacred parts of the *Avesta* are the *Gatha* or hymns of Zoroaster, which are very enigmatic. The sacred literature includes the *Pahlavi* texts, which contain extensive quotations and paraphrases of lost parts of the *Avesta*. The creed is likely to have been composed by Zoroaster himself, being used as a profession of faith by early converts. Zoroastrians perform short purification rituals with water (*Padyab*) and the *kusti* ritual several times a day. The *kusti* is a ritual cord worn by Zoroastrians around the waist, which is to be taken off and put back on several times a day as a symbol of devotion to Ahura Mazda. It is a cord consisting in symbolic form of seventy-two white threads, woven by the women of the priestly caste and consecrated by the priest. Why seventy-two? The seventy-two threads represent the seventy-two chapters of the *Yasna*, which is part of the *Avesta*. But this number will be found further on.

Prayers are still recited in the ancient Avestica language, which is considered sacred. There are also seasonal festivals (*Gahambar*) throughout the year. Fire (*Asha*), as a symbol of God's light, has a special place in the religion. Prayer is often recited before a consecrated fire perpetually lit in the main temples. But this brief *excursus* on the Avestica religion seems sufficient to me, as this is not the central theme of the research at hand. Some passages of interest instead for our purposes will now be seen.



The *Vendidad* (the law against demons) is a compendium of Zoroastrian liturgical texts whose purpose is to fight against evil forces, divided into chapters (*Fargard*).

In the *Vendidad*, *Fargard* II, 20 it is written, "Ahura Mazda answered, There are uncreated lights and created lights. The stars, the moon, the sun rise only once a year; and a year lasts only one day." . Already here we can see how they are talking about a year lived in the polar area, as in the *Vedas*.

But there is more; still in the *Vendidad Fargard* II (paras. 22-31, summarized here) Ahura Mazda says to Yima: "On the earth are about to fall fatal winters and a fierce frost, thick snowflakes will fall: All animals will perish. Build an enclosure (*vara*) and put in it all the seeds of animals, men and flaming fires, which you will keep. They shall each be two in number, male and female, the finest and best. And you shall seal the place with a golden ring."

It sounds like a story we have heard before, but much older than Noah's. And in the *Farvardin Yasht* (Hymn to the Guardian Angels), paragraphs 56-57, we read, "And now they grow up along the path marked out by Mazda, along the path indicated by the gods, in the time dedicated to them, by the will of Ahura Mazda, by the will of the Amesha-Spentas. We worship the good and strong Fravashi who help the faithful, who have shown their way by the stars, moon, sun, and endless lights, who had been waiting for a long time in the same place without moving, through the oppression and assaults of the Deva."

It can be noted here how The Fravashi (guardian spirits assimilated in part to the guardian angels of Christianity) showed the stars, the moon, the sun, and the endless lights the path of the gods, the path of Mazda, which began when the sun was freed from the oppression of the demons.

In the *Avesta*, the priests who were to guard the sacred fire in the temples were called *Atravan* (in the various Pahlavi and Persian translations *Atourban*, *Azarban, Azarvan*, while in the *Vedas* of India Atharvan is a famous *rishi* or priest, son of Brahma, who first lit the fire). The meaning of Azerbaidjan's name is "land of men of fire."

Marco Polo in his Milione also tells (30-31) the story of the Magi and states verbatim "Going 3 giornate, trovaro uno castello chiamato Calasata, this is to say in francesco 'castello de li oratori del fuoco'; and it is well true that those of the castle adore fire, and I will tell you why. The men of that castle say that anciently three lo' kings of that district went to worship a prophet, who was born, and they brought 3 offerings: gold to know if he was earthly lord, incense to know if he was Idio, myrrh to know if he was eternal........ (omissis)...... they found a stone, which Idio had given them in signification that they stood firm in the faith they had begun, as a stone. When they saw the stone, they greatly marveled, and cast this stone into a well; having cast the stone into the well, a fire came down from heaven burning, and cast itself into that well. When the kings saw this marvel, they repented of what they had done; and they took of that fire and brought it into their country and placed it in one of their churches. And all the times they make it burn and they worship that fire as a god; and all the sacrifices they make I condense of that fire, and when it is quenched, they go to the orig[i]nal, which always stands alight, nor ever would they light it but of that. Therefore they worship the fire those of that quarter; and all this they told messer Marco Polo, and it is veritade."

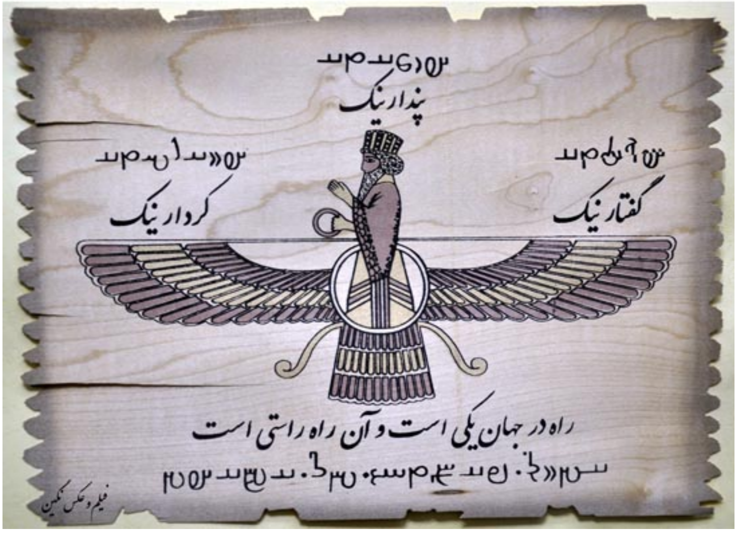
Here the Christian legend of the Magi, who follow, as skilled astronomers, the comet star, shows its more than obvious Zoroastrian origins. Even today there are Zoroastrian temples where perennial fire is worshipped, as in Yazd (Iran) and Baku where the Ateshgah or fire temple, now decommissioned and turned into a museum, is located. Ahura Mazda's messengers are the Angira, who later became the angels of the Christian tradition. As evidence of the coincidence of the traditions of the *Vedas* and the *Avesta* it is enough to mention that Agni is the god of fire in both sacred texts; in the *Vedas* he is the god of fire, son of Heaven and Earth, and in Zoroastrianism he is the spirit who lifts the prayers of men to heaven. For Hinduism he was the charioteer of the gods and through his mediation one could access the sphere of the Sacred. Fire is the central symbol of the Zoroastrian religion (wrongly accused of fire worship), and it plays a most important role in spiritual and liturgical life. The Indo-Iranian Aryans ritually consumed a drink called in Sanskrit *soma* and in Iranian *haoma*. This juice was extracted from a plant, then filtered and combined with water, milk and honey (symbols of fertility , sacredness and abundance). This drink was partly drunk and partly offered to the gods by passing it through fire. One may recall the custom of libation, by which drinks, especially wine, were offered to the deities. This custom was practiced by Persians, Greeks, Romans, Hebrews, Hittites and ancient Japanese. According to the *Avesta*, those who drank *haoma* experienced paradise. From the description of the plant it is thought that it might have been a mushroom, presumably hallucinogenic. Among the various hypotheses is the fungus of the genus Amanita, representations of which have been found in some rock paintings in the Sahara Desert dating from the Paleolithic (9000-7000 BCE), as pointed out by Giorgio Samorini in *Ethnomycology in Saharan Rock Art*. Contemporary Zoroastrianism uses the juice of an ephedra plant, which contains a powerful alkaloid.

In the *Avesta* it is made clear that the progenitors of the Iranians knew about the six-month day and night, the existence of a long darkness of up to a hundred nights, and had with the Hindus many religious and liturgical traditions in common. A separate discussion certainly deserves the Iranian conception of the ancient homeland ravaged by frost and ice in the far north. The first *Fargard* describes the happy countries created by Ahura Mazda, then ruined by Anghra Mainyu. Here is the list of these countries, with their eventual current correspondent, as identified by modern commentators:

Airyanəm Vaējah (literally "the cradle of the Aryans")
Sughda Samarkand
Môuru Merv
Bakhdhi Balkh
Nisaya
Haroyu Herat
Vehrkana Kabul
Gorgan
Urva Hispahan
Khnenta Kandahar
Haravaiti Harut
Haetumant Helmend
Ragha Rai
Chakra Korasan ?
Varena Ghilan ?
Hapta Hendu Panjaub
Rangha Caspian

Apparently this is simply a list of the countries known to the Iranians, and it must be said that modern identifications can also be arbitrary, especially considering that all migrating peoples tend to name their new places of permanence by their old names. But in the first *Fargard* (2-3) it is stated with absolute clarity: "The first of the good lands and countries created by Ahura Mazda was the Airyanəm Vaējah, by the Vanguhi Daitya River. Suddenly came Angra Mainyu, total death, which counter-created the snake in the river and winter, the work of the Deva. Here there are ten months of winter and two months of summer; and even in summer they freeze the waters, freeze the earth, freeze the plants. Winter and storm rages there, the worst of all plagues."

The indications, beginning with the ten-month winter, undoubtedly describe an area close to the north pole, moreover since it speaks of a beautiful country with good lands where the counter-creation of the evil god drastically changed the climate, the Iranians must have lived there before this dramatic change. This is evidently the earliest reference to the great change in climate, which occurred with the advent of an ice age, that has ever reached us.


پندار نیک
کردار نیک
گفتار نیک
راه در جهان یکی است و آن راه راستی است

It was pointed out in another chapter how according to all ancient traditions the cradle of the human race was described in a part of the world characterized by an extraordinary exuberance of life. It was, in short, the most beautiful of all lands.

Among the Persians the legendary tree of paradise had taken two forms; the first was that of the Gaokerena tree , or "the white Hôm" (Haoma = Soma); the second was that of the tree of all seeds. Of the former it is written, "Whoever eats of it becomes immortal ... even in the restructuring of the universe it gives immortality." Instead of the second we read, "Just as the animals born from the primeval ox, so tens of thousands of species major plants, and hundreds of thousands of species among common plants grew from the seeds of this 'tree

Where was this tree that was both the source of all other trees and the giver of immortality? All clues lead us to the North Pole. It was in the Airyanəm Vaējah, the Persian version of Eden. It was by the source of the Sûra Ardvî, surrounded by the star belt of zodiac constellations, and identified with the axis of the world. It had grown on the summit of Harâ-berezaiti, the celestial mountain at the pole. Too similar to the world tree of the Hindus, which gave the gods soma, the drink of immortality, similar to the ambrosia of the Greeks. For the Hindus, too, its roots lie in the underworld of Yama at the southern pole, its apex lies in the northern sky of the gods, its trunk is the supporting axis of the universe.

The movement of celestial bodies around the earth and climate change are put in a true logical relationship. In the first five chapters of the *Bundahishn*, a Zoroastrian cosmogony text, and in *Zâd Sparam*'s paraphrase of the same, it is stated that during the first three thousand years, before the arrival of the evil one, "the sun, moon and stars stood still," but then came the destroyer of creation who unbalanced the sky, the earth and the sea. It is stated that as a result of this aggression the evil one possessed "a third of the heavens" spreading darkness there. And later, in chapter thirty, a prophecy of the final restoration of the world to its primordial state is set forth, and there seems to be an allusion in verse thirty-two to the need for the creator to straighten the vault of heaven. This explanation seems to satisfy the hypothesis of an Arctic abode and a migration of humans to lower latitudes.

According to the sacred books of the ancient Iranians, all men who populate the seven *keshvare* (parts of the world) are descended from a primitive couple, whose names were Mâshyoi and Mâshya. The abode of this primitive couple was in the Kvanîras *keshvare*, the central region, the most beautiful of the seven. To determine its location, one must examine the conformation of the world according to this ancient people. At the center of the world stood the primordial tree, containing "the strength of all kinds of trees." The primeval ox, which stood near the heavenly river when the destroyer came, stood "in the center of the world." Mount Tera, the celestial pole, and Kakad-i-Daîtîk, the mountain of the earth's pole, are described in similar terms: one as "Center of the world," the other as "Center of the earth." The expression *Apâm Nepât*, "Navel of the Waters," is found several times in the Avestic writings and is always applied both to the source of the world from which all waters come and to the spirit that presides over it. But because this source of the world, Ardvî Sûra, is located in the sky of the north pole, we have here yet another recognition of an omphalos of the world, inseparable from the ancient and sacred mountain of paradise located at the pole.

For the ancient Iranians, the heavenly mountain was called Harâ-berezaiti, the mythical Albordj, seat of the genii, around which the sun, moon and stars revolved; the path leading the Blessed to paradise passed through it. The following description, in one of Rashnu's invocations in the *Rashn Yasht*, is all too reminiscent of the description of the celestial Olympus in the Odyssey: "you, O Holy Rashnu, are on Harâ-berezaiti, the bright mountain around which the stars revolve, where there is neither night nor darkness, neither cold nor hot winds, no deadly disease, no impurity created by the Deva, and where the clouds cannot reach; we invoke and bless you, O Rashnu."

Here stood the heavenly spring Ardvî-Sûra, the mother of all earthly waters and the source of all good things. In the middle of the lake formed by the waters of the sacred spring grew a single miraculous tree, or, again, two trees, corresponding exactly to those in biblical Eden.

There was the garden of Ahura Mazda, like that of Brahma on Meru. From there the waters flowed down to the four cardinal points in four great streams, which were symbolized by the four horses attached to the chariot of the sacred spring goddess, Ardvî-Sûra-Anâhita. These four horses are reminiscent of the four animals placed at the source of the river of paradise in Hindu conception.

In the second *Fargard* we have a legendary account of the successive migrations of early humans from the original northern quarter southward to find the sun, and almost all commentators attribute these continuous southward movements to the gradual cooling and glaciation of the primitive dwelling in "ancient Iran." Here is found the oldest Iranian account of Yima, the first man and king of the Golden Age. A detailed account is also given of a *Vara*, or enclosure, which was a kind of safe dwelling, a refuge, a kind of garden of Eden, that he ordered to be built. Then comes this singular question, "O creator of the material world, thou only saint! What lights are there in the *Vara* made by Yima?"

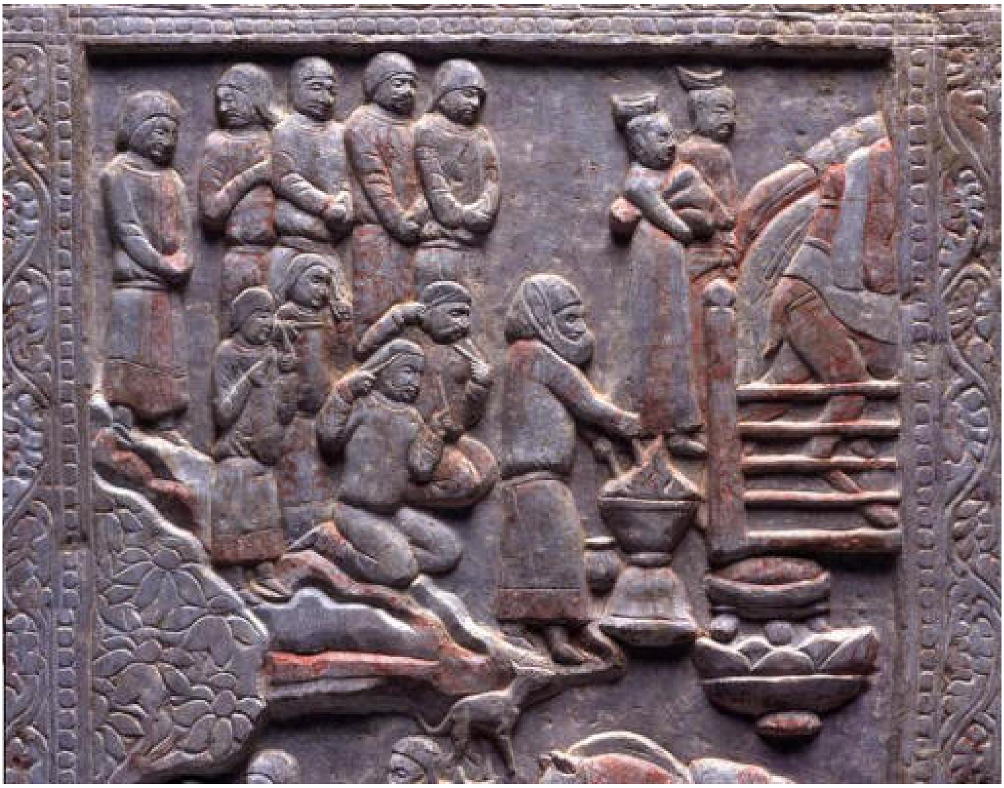
We have seen the answer before, "There are the uncreated lights and the created ones....and a year lasts only one day."

Again confirming that we are talking about the near-pole areas.

Let us consider for a moment the rivers that flow from the sacred spring. In Persian thought, not only the rivers of heaven, but also all rivers throughout the earth, have a unique source and also a unique place of discharge. The source is the Ardvî-Sûra and it is located in heaven, that is, the pole heaven. This heavenly spring is the source of a thousand and one channels, which pass through all the seven *keshvare*, or regions of the earth, carrying the pure heavenly waters everywhere. The following is an ancient invocation to Anâhita, the spirit of these heavenly waters: "Come to me, Ardvî-Sûra Anâhita! Come down from the stars to the earth created by Ahura Mazda! The neighboring lords, the rulers of the countries and their children will worship you."

In Avestica tradition, the mountain from which the heavenly water descends is so high that it rises to the heavens, and is called Hûgar, meaning "the noble one." All the waters of the rivers of the earth, all the lakes, seas and the ocean itself are derived from this heavenly source, mere parts of the stream that descends from the heavens themselves. Indeed, all that is liquid in nature, plant sap, blood, milk, plant sap and all seventeen types of liquid enumerated in the *Yashts* (a collection of hymns in the *Avesta*), are part of a single cosmic current. But where does this current go? What does it become at the end of its flow? Everything begins at the zenih, so it must end at the nadir. Indeed it does, but the waters, now polluted by their contact with all the dirt and filth of the world, cannot remain in this cesspool of the universe, which has a permeable bottom. Through various processes the polluted waters are distilled and purified by the venerable Tishtar (spirit guiding the star Sirius), and then re-charged at the zenith to perpetually feed the streams of Ardvî-Sûra. It is never forgotten, even for a moment, that the original undivided stream originates in the northern polar sky in the center of Kvanîras, the circumpolar *keshvare* of the habitable earth.

The Iranian belief of eras, as reported in the *Bundahishn*, was similar to the Hindu belief. Here the duration of the universe is described as divided into four periods of three thousand years each. During the first of the four everything is pure and sinless, but at its end the Evil One declares war on Ahura Mazda, the Holy God, a war that is destined to continue into the final three eras. Initially the Evil One prevails; subsequently good and evil are exactly balanced; while in the last period, which is ours, evil maintains supremacy until its final defeat.



According to Zoroastrian doctrine, the souls of the dead, evil and good leave this world to enter the invisible one by passing through the Chinvat Bridge.

Let us try to understand the nature of this bridge. Some have suggested that it must have been the rainbow or the Milky Way or both.

So Warren asked himself some questions: In the Avesta, is the bridge described as curvilinear? No, it was straight.

Were the two ends designed on a common level? No, it was tilted.

Where was the highest end? In the sky of Ahura Mazda, the supreme god, toward whom the souls of the good ascended, near the north pole of heaven.

And where did it end on earth? On Daitik Peak, which is part of the sacred mountain that stands in the Airyanəm Vaējah, the Eden of the Iranians, located in the center of the world.

In which *keshvare*? In Kvanîras, the central of the seven parts of the earth, the one in which men and the right religion were created. North of Iran.

What natural "center of the earth" is located in that direction? The north pole.

Does it need any further proof that Daitîk's peak is located at the north pole? The mountain, of which this is simply "the judgment peak," is Harâberezaiti, around which the heavenly bodies revolve, and which evidently corresponds to the Su-Meru of the Hindus.

Then the Chinvat Bridge extends from the north pole of heaven to the north pole of earth: What is its shape? It is shaped like a ray.

To quote the holy book, "The bridge is like a beam of many sides, whose edges are some large and others are thin and sharp; its sides are so large that its width is twenty-seven rods, and its thin sides are as sharp as the blade of a razor. And when the souls of the righteous and the wicked come, each has the side best suited to him."

The Chinvat Bridge is ultimately simply the axis of the northern sky, the pillar of Atlas, the Talmudic hill of Zion, the pillar on which in Chinese legend the emperor tried in vain to climb! Having thus solved this question, Warren also unlocked the mystery that covered Bifröst and Al Sirat. Locating the bridge identified the Iranian Eden, whose location is indisputably at the north pole. It follows that in the mythical geography of this people the world of the living was originally the circumpolar northern hemisphere.

Let us now see how the *keshvare* were arranged. Like the wonderful Ilâvrita *varsha* of the Hindus, the "illustrious Kvanîras" retains its central position. In its center is the holiest mountain in the world. Directly above it lies true paradise. In this central polar country, the four cardinal points would be meaningless; but speaking from their own geographical point of view as south of Airyanəm Vaējah, Iranians locate Kvanîra in the east, Arzah in the west, the *keshvare* Fradadafsh and Vidadafsh in the south, Vôrûbarst and Vôrûgarst in the north . Above one can appreciate a map of the northern hemisphere of the earth according to the Iranians.

It would have been a fascinating task to reinterpret all Avestica literature and mythology in light of this cosmology, but that would have required a book all to itself. It should be remembered that the *Vendidad* expressly calls the earth "round," and apparently acknowledges the existence of its two poles. As we have seen, the Chinvat bridge is the axis of the world, leading the good souls with a "flight" upward into the northern sky of Ahura Mazda, and flinging the wicked with a headlong fall into the southern hell. Airyanəm Vaējah, or "Old Iran," was the most logical name in the world that Iranians could give to the traditional birthplace of their people, but all attempts to find it on the shores of the Araxas or in the distant lands of the East proved utterly futile. Equally wrong was the claim that it would be located east of the Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea. It is simply the 'Arctic Eden of mankind remembered as it was before the evil one entered it to create with his evil arts a raw winter.

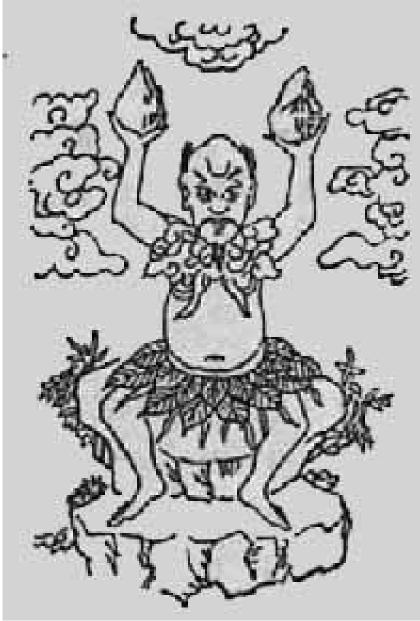
It has already been remarked that the stars, instead of appearing to rise and set with us, would have had a horizontal movement from left to right around the observer, a movement impossible anywhere else on earth. Therefore, when we find in antiquity any reference to a movement of the heavenly bodies different from the present, especially if we find some evidence of a movement of the stars in apparently horizontal orbits, this undoubtedly becomes convincing and irrefutable evidence that man had begun to observe the starry sky in the vicinity of the north pole.

THE HEAVENLY EMPIRE

We don't need anything. We already own everything.

- Chien Lung, Chinese Emperor

Among the civilizations developed by the xanthoderm race, the Chinese civilization, thousands of years old, should be mentioned first. Chinese civilization, as described in mythology, begins with Pangu, the creator of the universe, followed by a succession of legendary sage-emperors and mythological heroes (such as Huang Di, Yao and Shun) who taught the ancient Chinese how to communicate and find sustenance, clothing and shelter.



The earliest prehistoric dynasty is the Xia , from the twenty-first to the sixteenth century B.C. Until the first scientific excavations were carried out in 1928 at Bronze Age sites in Anyang, Henan Province, it was difficult to separate myth from reality regarding this dynasty. But since then, especially between 1960 and 1970, archaeologists have discovered urban sites, bronze elements and tombs that indicate the existence of the Xia civilization in the exact same locations mentioned in ancient Chinese historical texts. At the very least, the Xia period marked an evolutionary stage between the Late Neolithic cultures and the typical Shang Dynasty Chinese urban civilization.

Thousands of archaeological finds in Huang He, Henan Valley-the cradle of Chinese civilization-provide evidence about the Shang Dynasty, which lasted roughly from 1700 to 1027 B.C. The Shang Dynasty (also called the Yin Dynasty in its later stages) is believed to have been founded by a rebel leader who overthrew the last Xia ruler. It was a civilization based on agriculture, hunting and animal husbandry. Two important events of the period were the development of a writing system, as evidenced by inscriptions in archaic Chinese found on tortoise shells and flat cattle bones (commonly called oracular bones), and the use of bronze metallurgy. Several bronze ceremonial vessels with inscriptions dating back to the Shang period have been found, and their workmanship attests to a high level of civilization. The hereditary Shang dynasty ruled over much of northern China, and its troops fought frequent wars against neighboring peoples and nomadic herders of the Asian steppes. The capitals, one of which was at the site of the modern city of Anyang, were centers of brilliant court life. Rituals to propitiate spirits and honor sacred ancestors were highly developed.

In addition to his secular position, the king was also the head of the ancestor cult. It is noted from the royal tombs that important people were buried with valuables, presumably for their use in the afterlife. Perhaps for the same reason hundreds of commoners, who may have been slaves, were buried alive with the king's corpse. The last Shang ruler, a despot by Chinese standards (I cannot even imagine what he was like!), was overthrown by the leader of a frontier tribe called the Zhou, who had settled in the Wei Valley in present-day Shaanxi Province. The Zhou dynasty had its capital in Hao, near the city of Xi'an, or Chang'an, as it was known in its heyday in imperial times. Sharing the language and culture of the Shang dynasty, the early Zhou rulers, through conquest and colonization, gradually extended Shang culture across much of China just north of the Chang Jiang or Yangtze River. The Zhou dynasty lasted longer than any other, from 1027 to 221 B.C. The philosophers of this period first enunciated the doctrine of the "mandate of heaven" (tianming), that is, the notion that the ruler (the "son of heaven") was so by divine right, but that his dethronement would prove that he had lost the mandate. The doctrine thus explained and justified the demise of the previous two dynasties while upholding the legitimacy of current and future rulers. The Zhou period has often been interpreted as feudal, because the system of decentralization was comparable to that in place in Europe in medieval times. However, it would be more correct to call it proto-feudal, as it was only a more sophisticated version of the earlier tribal organization, in which effective control depended more on family ties than on feudal-type legal obligations.

It should be mentioned here that one of the fundamental cultural traits of the Far East is the cultivation of rice as a basic component of the economy necessary for human expansion in the area. Well, Thai archaeologist Surin Pookajorn has found rice grains in a cave in Sakaj on the Malay Peninsula at a site dated between 9260 and 7620 years ago. The furnishings found there are similar to those of ancient Indochinese Neolithic sites located even further south. So rice cultivation would seem to have been introduced in very remote times and then exported north to China, where traces of rice cultivation have been found dating back 7000-5000 years. But then did Chinese civilization perhaps have its origins further south? Interesting hypothesis, which would be supported by several pieces of evidence. To speak of evidence is always excessive when searching for some truth in such distant eras. Instead, the origin of noodles, another dietary staple of the Chinese, has been attributed to the white ancestral peoples of the Tocari and Uiguri. In 2005, Chinese researchers discovered at the archaeological site of Lajia in northwest China the remains of the world's oldest noodles, dating back to at least 2,000 B.C., made from millet flour. Since there has been much debate about the Chinese authorship or otherwise of pasta, I must report for the record that there is evidence of the existence of various pasta shapes in Italy long before Marco Polo's voyage to the East. For example, the finding in an Etruscan tomb of a pasta flattener, rolling pin and pasta cutter wheel. Or a quote from Apicius, a Roman gastronome and gourmet from the time of Augustus, who died by suicide when, after squandering a fortune, he realized that he had only(!) 10 million sesterces left. While there is news of the first dry pasta in Sicily during Arab rule, from the geographer al-Idrisi (in his book *Kitāb Rugiār*). Now I feel proud to have defended the national honor, for which spaghetti is a flag and a symbol.

Religiously speaking, the oldest traceable cult in China is that of Shang-ti (the Heavenly Emperor), the highest of all gods, dating back more than 4,000 years. He is generally described as the sky god. But his dwelling place, his palace, is called Tsz-wei. And if we look up the meaning and location of Tsz-wei, Chinese commentators of sacred books inform us that it is "a celestial space near the North Pole." Here, as in Japan and Egypt, India and Iran and Greece, the Pole is "the center" of the sky. In the *Chinese Repository,* a periodical published in Canton from 1832 to 1851 for the use of Protestant missionaries in the area, these quotations from authoritative religious books were published: "the pole star is in the center of the sky," "the throne of Shang-ti is in Tsz-wei, that is, the pole star," "immediately above the central mountain of Kwen-lun appears the pole star, which is the heavenly abode of Shang-ti," "in the place of the pole star, in the center of the sky dwells the Great Light from time immemorial." According to this conception, the emperor and his attendants always faced north when the officiant stood before the altar of heaven. The pole star itself has remained an important object of worship, even after 4,000 years, as evidenced by the following anecdote told by Dr. Joseph Edkins, a Protestant missionary working in China from 1848 to 1905: "I once met a schoolmaster from the Chapoo district, who asked me if I had any books on astronomy and geography to give him, books desired by all members of the educated class.... I put the question to him: -Who is the Lord of heaven and earth?- He answered that he knew of none, but he knew of the North Star, called in the Chinese language Teen-hwang-ta-te, the great imperial ruler of heaven." We saw above that Kwen-lun, a heavenly mountain, very often called the Pearl Mountain, was mentioned; on its summit stands heaven, with a spring from which the four great rivers of the world flow, flowing in opposite directions. Around this mythical peak revolve the visible heavens, while the stars closest to the pole are the abode of the lower deities and genii. Everything coincides with the traditions already seen. A coincidence?

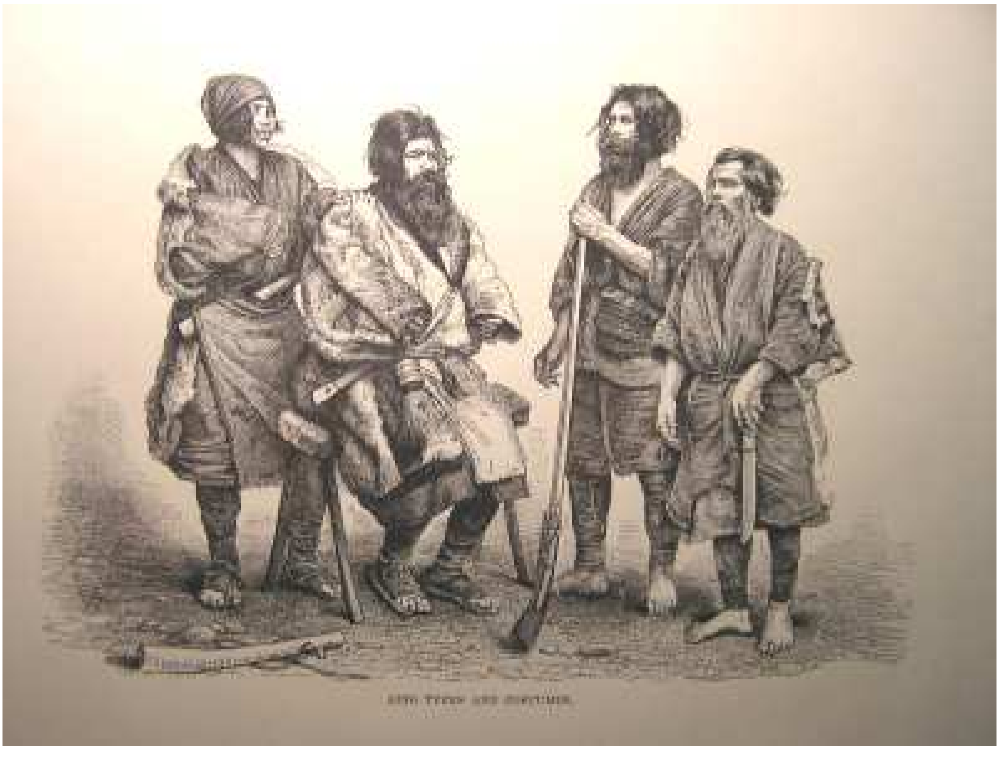
THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN

Zipangu is an island--very big.

The people are white, of fine manner and handsome.

- Marco Polo

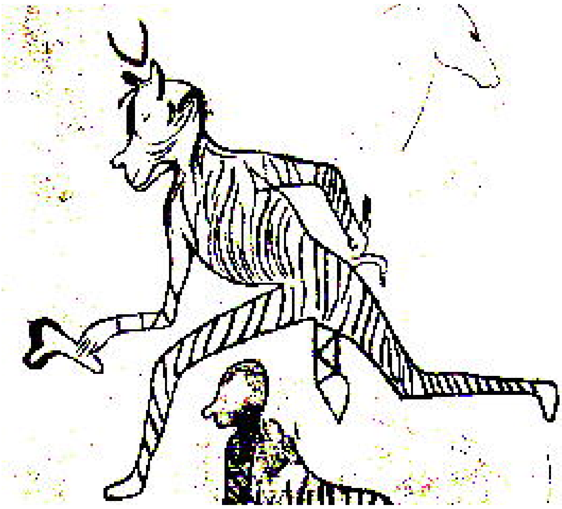
Continuing to move into the misunderstood Far East for us, we will find that we have the earliest traces of Mesolithic or perhaps Neolithic (archaeologists have not yet agreed) presence in faraway Japan in 10,000 B.C., with the beginning of the Jomon culture, which dates back to the earliest inhabitants of Japan, the Ainu. These have distinctive features: pale skin, hairy body, long nose, and do not have the Mongolian crease in their eyes.



A population, now nearly extinct, of which perhaps a few thousand individuals remain, which is often believed to be aboriginal to the archipelago, but which is generally defined as white non-Caucasian. But what does this sibylline definition mean ?

Let us begin by trying to understand who the Ainu would have been. They are a people who still inhabited, until a few centuries ago, the island of Hokkaido (formerly called "Savage Island" by the Japanese) and some other smaller islands, as well as the extreme coasts of the Asian continent. Their language, now almost obsolete, is not traceable to any other idiom. However, more than 200 similarities with Indo-European have been found (among which we note: ainu tu "two," Indo-European dwō; ainu tan "this," Indo-European to; ainu ku "I," Indo-European ego; ainu un "we," Indo-European ns). Their totemic animal was the bear, as among the Celts and American Indians. While we are at it, I will also remind you of the Scandinavian Berserkr warriors, dressed in bear (berr) or wolf (baar) skins.

Where did the Ainu come from? According to some Japanese religious writings, a deity (actually the Japanese term, Kami, is not perfectly translatable in these terms, but that is not the case here, which is marginal), who superintended the wind and storm, was driven out of the Plains of High Heaven, a kind of paradise, and was forced to live among men, This god joined with many women, creating a dynasty of lords, who were then exterminated or subdued by the gods of the lineage of the sun goddess. A curiosity: many of the vanquished lords had tails, almost to characterize their crude bestiality.



And it brings to mind the depictions, probably of shamans, depicted in ancient caves in Europe, with horns on their heads and in the act of dancing. Or even descriptions of centaurs and satyrs. Or certain predynastic Egyptian graffiti, found in the desert east of the Nile, from which the pharaohs would later take the bull's tail as a symbol of power.

However, these ancient peoples would be the Ainu, whose numerous unions with invaders from Korea and the mainland around 2000 B.C. are attested, giving rise to the Japanese people.

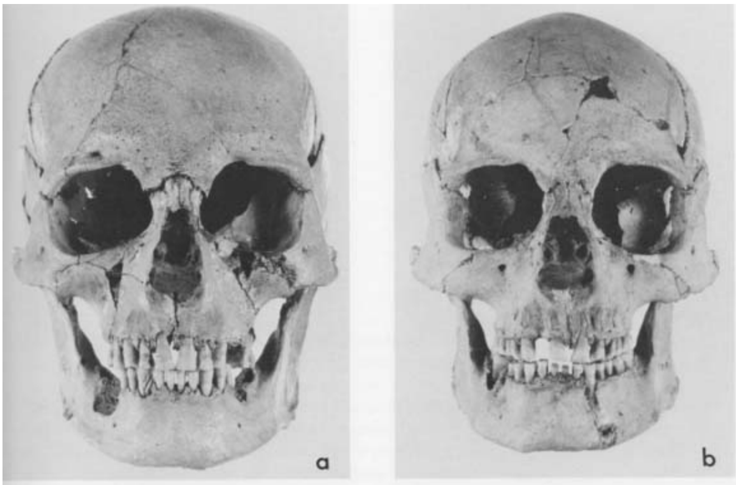


Plate 2. Jomon skulls from Hokkaido.
a: Adult male skull from the Takasago site (No. 1).
b: Adult female skull from the Takasago site (No. 21).

It is certain that there was an endemic state of warfare with the Ainu until the 17th century. Some old place names in Japan are also of Ainu origin: for example, the name of the Fuji volcano is derived from Fuchi, the fire goddess of the Ainu.

They are believed to have arrived in the Japanese islands around 12,000 B.C. from Siberia, passing through Sakhalin Island and the Kurils.

Genetically speaking, the Jomon, like the Ainu, carry haplogroup D, a genetic marker that identifies descendants of hunter-gatherer tribes who arrived in Japan before the separation of the Japanese islands from the mainland as a result of the sea level rise caused by the end of the last ice age, the Wurm ice age, between 20 and 12 millennia B.C. Extensive research has been conducted in Japan on ainu artifacts (mainly skulls and skeletons), particularly by Yoko Dodo ("*A metrical analysis of Jomon crania from the Tohoku district. Journal of the Anthropological Society of Nippon*," Vol. 90, 1982).

From the results it has been insinuated that the Japanese and Asian populations belong to the classical Mongolid category, while the much less

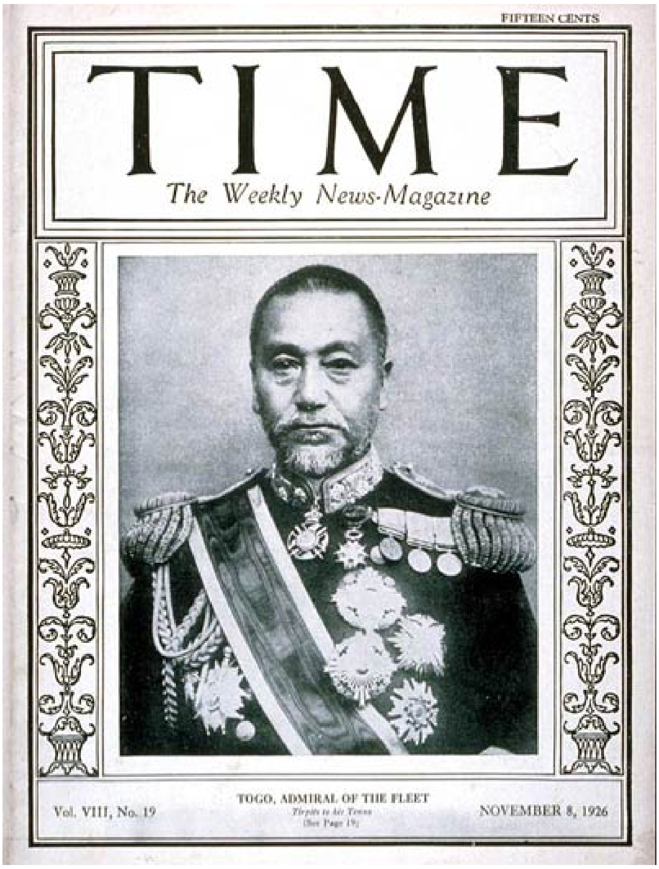
Mongolid Jomon and Ainu are believed to have belonged much more likely to the proto- or pre-Mongolid category.

It has also been suggested that the Ainu of Hokkaido must be the direct descendants of the ancient Jomon people of Japan. A curiosity: the women had the habit of tattooing their lips, like the Tocarie women.

I add, as a further clue, that the Ochotsk Sea, located between East Siberia, Kamchatka, the Kurils and Hokkaido, has a curious name for the Ainu: ancient sea, sea left behind, sea crossed in the past.

A U.S. anthropologist, C. Loring Brace of the University of Michigan, has argued that the Samurai caste is descended from the Ainu, and in fact we could see old photographs of samurai, who really seemed to have physical characteristics intermediate between Europids and Mongolians.

I brought as an example the photograph of Japanese Admiral Togo Heihachiro, national hero of the Russo-Japanese War.


FIFTEEN CENTS
TIME
The Weekly News-Magazine
Vol. VIII, No. 19
TOGO, ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET
(See Page 19)
NOVEMBER 8, 1926

Brace has analyzed the skeletons of more than 1,000 Japanese, Ainu and other Asian ethnic groups. His is a groundbreaking thesis that has been harshly criticized, especially in Japanese scientific circles, perhaps out of misguided ethnic nationalism.

The prehistory of Japan has been mentioned. Some ancient megalithic tombs, with a distinctive trapezoidal doorway, appear worthy of mention.

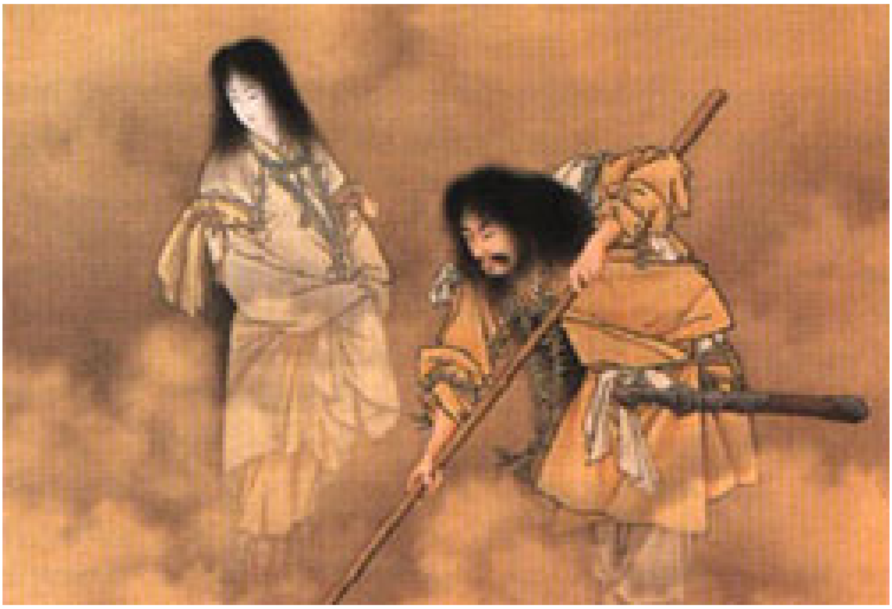
According to archaeological evidence, during the Jomon period the world's earliest clay pottery and figures, dating from about 11,000 years B.C. (Odai-Yamato site finds, dated by the carbon-14 method), as well as the earliest polished stone artifacts, would have been fashioned. The production of clay pots implies some kind of sedentary life, since they are very fragile artifacts, thus useless in a hunter-gatherer society on constant movement. So this would be the world's first sedentary or at least semi-sedentary population. According to recent genetic studies on the mitochondrial haplogroups C and D (genetic markers typical of Western Eurasia, South America and--strange case--Oregon), the Ainu would also have passed through America, where they would have carried HTLV-I, the leukemia retrovirus.

Because of this, the earliest forms of agriculture are sometimes attributed to Japan around 10,000 B.C., two thousand years before they spread to the Middle East. So much for beginning to admit that we know very little about it and that our ignorance is really crass.

About the ancient religious conceptions of the Japanese, they have always believed that in the primordial sea, at the beginning of the cosmogonic and geogonic process, stood the Shinto deity Izanagi, who had caused the lands to rise from the ocean by mixing it with a spear. It seems clear that in Japanese cosmogony the spear that Izanagi thrusts into the ground becomes the vertical axis of heaven and earth. Thus Izanagi cannot be anywhere other than at the north pole of heaven.

And the concept of creation was so deeply associated with the auction that one of Izanagi's most important titles stemmed precisely from this relationship with the auction.

To reconnect with the myths of classical Greece, I must mention that Izanami, his bride and sister, had died to give birth to the god of fire. Izanagi was seized with a fit of rage and killed him, later descending to hell to bring his beloved bride back to life. But here he found that she had become the evil queen of the underworld for feeding herself with the infernal food. There is something reminiscent of both the Prometheus and Demeter myths.



In the ancient writings of the Japanese, it is said, "I will do absolute justice to *Koji-ki* (the oldest Japanese literary document), the Shinto religion and Japanese philosophy by saying that, according to them, there was in the beginning one and only one god." And it is also stated that "far away in the infinite depth of space, on a throne of silence, is seated the God Ame-no-mi-naka-nushi-no-kami," whose name means the Lord of the center of heaven.

And with regard specifically to the Ainu, the earliest inhabitants of Japan, it is interesting to point out how they believed that they came to the archipelago "from" the north; that their sky was located on inaccessible peaks in the same direction, and that their name, according to some scholars, would etymologically mean "Progeny of the center." In burial, the dead were always arranged with their faces facing north from where their ancestors had come, and to which their spirits would return.

Oddly enough (!) in Scandinavian mythology we encounter a similar conception. In the Edda, both Asgard and Idavollr are presented as "the center of the world"; and this has always been a real puzzle for many exegetes.

One more detail: The Ainu have their own distinctive dog, known as the Rokkaido, Kyushu or Ochi dog, which proceeds from the mountainous region of Hokkaido island,where it was brought by the Ainus when they migrated thousands of years ago. It has changed little since their arrival and resembles the Scandinavian Spitz, differing from the Japanese Spitz, the Akita. It looks much like, but heavier (20-30kg) than the Italian Volpino, on the other hand miniaturized by man, as evidenced by the skull bone structure. Detail: The first image of the Volpino, in terracotta, dates back to the Mycenaean civilization (1200 BC).

THE WORD

Looking for the word, thoughts are found.

- Joseph Joubert

It is time to pause and go back in time. Generally, when we talk about the different ancient and modern languages and their differences or similarities, we are always reminded of the myth of the Tower of Babel. Let us now try to understand more about it. We know that there are different language families, but it is not clear to us how they are related to each other and how they originated, whether from a common strain or from differentiated origins.

In 1992, Johanna Nichols, professor of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley, published a very interesting book, *Linguistic Diversity in Space and Time*, in which she applies the method of comparative linguistics up to 5,000 years B.C., thus identifying Southeast Asia as the epicenter of linguistic dispersion following the last ice age. The scholar considers one language tree for all mankind with a new method based on the statistical approach of grammatical structures. It is not the case here to delve into the methodology, which would be too burdensome for the writer and those reading these lines. Premised on the fact that the linguist's research extends

Cantabricum
Foro-Juliana
Helvetia
Deutsch
ITALICA
Padre nostro, che sei ne' Cieli. Sia sanctificato il tuo Nome.
Biscaina/Cantabrica
HISPANICA
Padre nuestro, que estas en los cielos. Sanctificado sea el tu Nombre
Catalana
Mauritan.
Hetrusca
LATINA
Pater noster qui es in Cælis.
SLAVONICA
GRÆCA
Corsica
Sardinia
Majorca
MARE
Sicilia
MEDIT

back to the Paleolithic, I will say that the end of the glaciation represents for her a dividing line that was followed by linguistic dispersion. especially in Eurasia, following a devastation of coastal communities by a series of floods.

Already in ancient times, on the basis of the literal interpretation of the Bible, the existence of a primal mother tongue had been hypothesized, from which all the languages of the world would later be derived, as recounted in the tale of the tower of Babel. In 1866 the *Société de linguistique de Paris* vetoed all glottogonical research, i.e., tending to reconstruct the original language, whose proponents developed theories that it would have been spoken roughly between 50 and 100,000 years ago, when the strains of the ancestors of Homo sapiens separated. This language would have spread from a small population and would not necessarily have been the first human language, but only the most recent and common ancestor of all the languages known today, having behind it a long evolution, having possibly existed together with other languages of which no trace has survived. This hypothesis would imply an origin of language that predates human phylogenetic separation. Considering the so-called Mitochondrial Eve hypothesis, this language has been thought to date back about 150,000 years ago. A related hypothesis is also that of the reduction of humanity due to the so-called Toba catastrophe. About 75,000 years ago the Toba volcano exploded, worsening the already harsh climate due to the glacial period. The human population would have shrunk to a small number of individuals (perhaps only 2,000) generating a bottleneck to which the primitive common language would date. Protolanguage theory made use of mass lexical comparison i.e., related words in different languages. In particular, Russian linguist Sergei Anatolievič Starostin has reconstructed several protolanguages and hypothesized the existence of a very ancient Boreal Language (assisted in his project by Murray Gell-Mann, former Nobel Laureate in physics), verifying etymological correspondences between the major Old World macrofamilies, Eurasian, Afro-Asiatic, Sinocaucasian and Austric with potential parallels to Amerindo and several African language families. Linguist Merritt Ruhlen (who has coordinated studies in historical linguistics with those in genetics together with Luigi Luca Cavalli Sforza and with those in archaeology together with Colin Renfrew) is one of the most ardent and controversial proponents of the hypothesis of a world protolanguage, relying on the comparative method. But let us return to Nichols, who has devoted 35 years of her life to this study of languages, traveling within Asia, to Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan to describe and preserve native idioms, studying the spread of languages in the Pacific Ocean area, always looking for the linguistic clock that would allow one to go back in time. Until she had been able to go back 5,000 or at most 10,000 years in reconstructing language families, beyond that one could not go. With her method, considering more grammar than vocabulary comparison, pointing out that the tone used differentiates meanings, she was able to reconstruct a huge wave of human migrations that began about 50,000 years ago somewhere in Southeast Asia. For thousands of years, successive groups of people could move relatively quickly by traveling by sea. For thousands of years, they carried their tongues to the coast of New Guinea and northern Australia, while other groups moved clockwise along the coast of Asia, across the Bering Strait into Alaska, and then down the west coast of the Americas. Interestingly, biologists have recently discovered genetic evidence that would suggest Nichols is right. Ted Schurr, a member of a team of geneticists at Emory University in Atlanta, spent years comparing mitochondrial DNA, a genetic material that is passed only from mother to child, from groups of people around the world. He thus discovered a genetic marker that appears in virtually the same pattern of language expansion as Nichols. Genetic studies would indicate that, after leaving Africa, the first modern humans would have colonized the southern coast of Asia before spreading north. From here some of the earliest immigrants would have arrived in the New World during the Ice Age, paddling from island to island across the Aleutian Islands to the Pacific coast of Alaska. For 60 years, archaeologists had believed that the first pioneers from Asia crossed the land bridge connecting Siberia to Alaska no more than 11,500 years ago, toward the end of the Ice Age. This was based on finds from Clovis, New Mexico, some 11,000 years old. But in 1997 anthropologist Tom Dillehay of the University of Kentucky studied in Mote Verde, Chile, some artifacts excavated as early as 20 years earlier, dating back more than 12,500 years, perhaps even more than 33,000. This coincided with the dating given by Nichols through her classification of languages, a true linguistic clock, according to which it would have taken multiple waves of prehistoric immigrants over 20,000 to 30,000 years to produce the abundance of languages found in the Americas. For example, he had calculated that it would take at least 7,000 years for a language to become established in the deep Southern Cone. Considering the Mote Verde artifacts, Nichols found that immigrants must have entered the New World at least 7,000 years earlier, or at least 19,500 years ago. Not everyone agrees with her conclusions, however. Nicholas Evans of the University of Melbourne, believes that the language clock had different speeds in America and Australia, which has fewer language families despite being populated much earlier (50,000 years).

Alaska
Asian mainland
Aleutian Islands
Japan
North America
Hawaii
Marshall

Dr. Douglas Wallace, one of the pioneers of human genetics, estimated that the first humans moved from Siberia to America 20,000 to 40,000 years ago, and more recently, Antonio Torroni, formerly a colleague of Ted Schurr at Emory University and then a full professor and pro-rector at the University of Pavia, used mitochondrial DNA to narrow the field from 22,000 to 29,000 years ago.

Johanna Nichols also consulted her language clock to address the question of the emergence of human language. The great diversity among the world's existing languages can only be explained by assuming the birth of language from 100,000 to 132,000 years ago. Even then it would be necessary to assume that language was born at about the same time in groups of 10 or more humans scattered throughout East Africa, which according to the now dominant theory would be the cradle of modern humanity. Now some biologists believe language evolved gradually over several hundred thousand years, while some archaeologists think modern language flourished at the same time as painted caves, carvings and other symbolic activities about

50,000 years ago. Indeed, there is much controversy about the dating methods used, so consequently also about the dates offered.

ANCIENT WRITINGS

Reading makes a man complete,
conversation makes him agile in spirit
And the writing makes it exact.

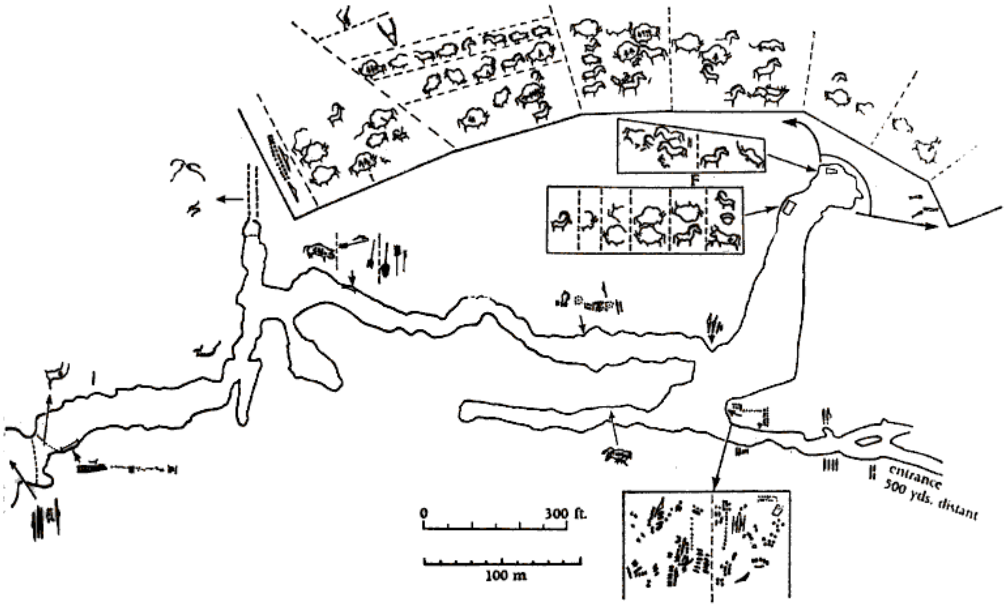
- Francis Bacon

How and when did you move from speaking to writing?

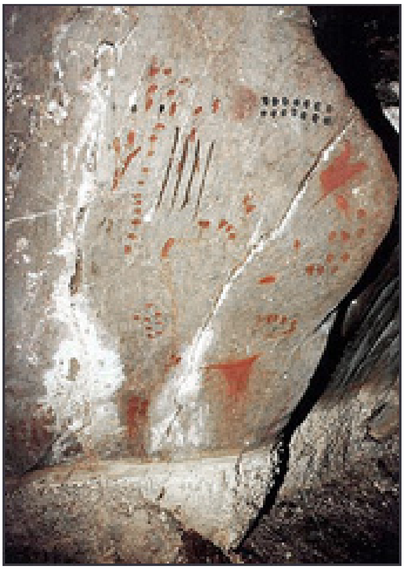
Genevieve von Petzinger, a promising young researcher, thanks to the possibilities offered by computers, was able to analyze the geometric signs of 146 painted prehistoric caves in order to verify their mutual relationships; in particular, she focused on the geometric signs found in Ice Age rock art sites in France. Her research focused on their temporal and spatial scanning on a large scale.

Are geometric signs perhaps the first step toward symbolism? This might be the case in some contexts, for example at Blombos in South Africa around 75,000 B.C., or in Australia with the Panamaritee style (which seems to predate the peopling of Australia by Aborigines by a long way, thus posing the big problem of figuring out to which unknown population it would date). In painted European caves, however, geometric signs almost always appear to be associated with animal figures, and so one cannot easily claim to be dealing with primordial symbolism. An interesting example is offered by the cave of Niaux, at the foot of the French Pyrenees.

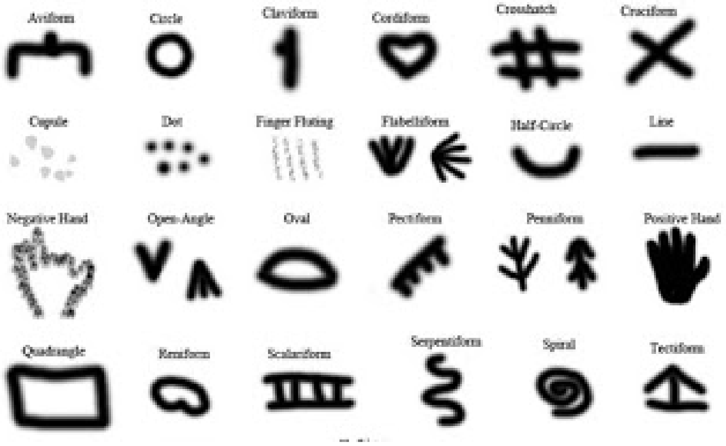
The main entrance leads to a large, high-ceilinged cave. The walls of the cave are smooth and clear, without decoration. Along the first 400 meters there are no paintings or carvings. But at a particular point in the cave the space becomes limited, due to an ancient collapse of huge boulders. Passing through a narrow tunnel, one comes to a larger space, on both sides of which paintings begin to appear, in the form of symbols.



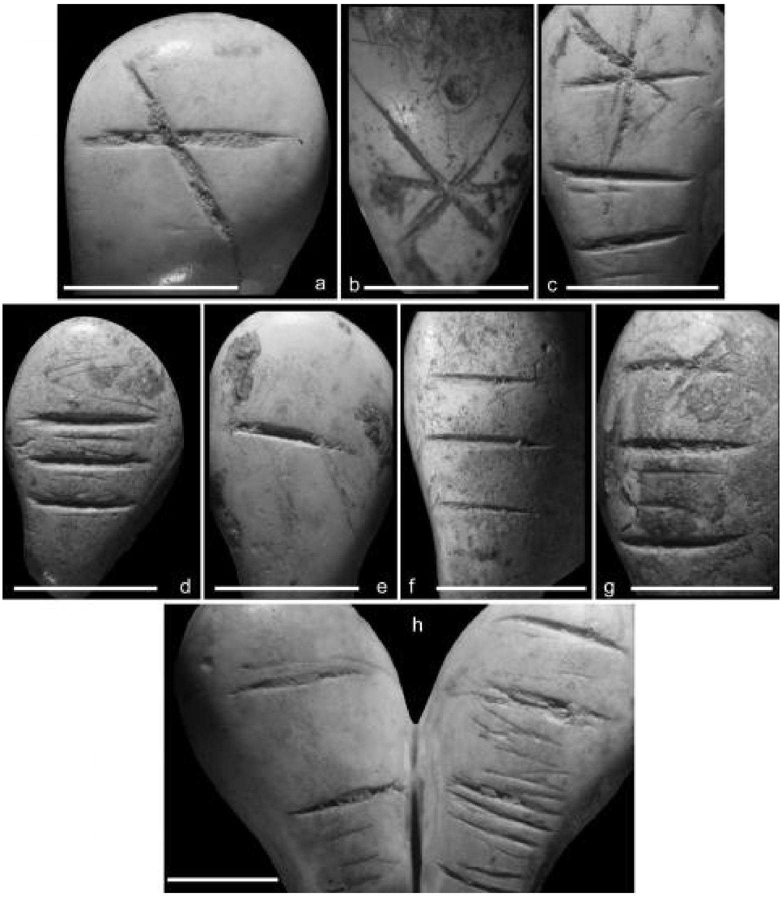
Simple, linear lines in red seem to mark the beginning of the painted cave; these restrained and enigmatic decorations continue, with a hundred red and black geometric signs-dashes, bars, lines, series of dots-some painted using tools, others with fingers. The red is hematite, the black is manganese dioxide or charcoal, mixed with either earth or water or fat. A little further on, animal figures appear. Are the geometric signs writing that can be deciphered? Difficult to answer. For the moment it can only be asserted that they do not have the characteristics of "writing," which entails not only ideograms or pictograms (whose possible meanings are absolutely cultural factors). Moreover, they do not have a syntax. If there are not the systematic repetitions found in an ordered syntax, we will never be able to guess the precise meaning of ideograms or even less their organization within a graffito. But the abstract nature of these signs is some of the best evidence that these images were not made solely for aesthetic value, but we can see a symbolic role for these signs, to communicate ideas that were not easily described with images. No doubt figurative paintings are visually appealing, but the question remains: why did our ancestors make them? While depictions of animals are a common theme in most regions where rock art is present, the choice of what to depict seems connected semplicementer to their coeval fauna. But geometric signs, on the other hand, are not figurative, so their meaning may well have varied over time and space.



Here are some enigmatic geometric signs from Niaux. There has always been a tendency to neglect symbols in favor of visually representative carvings and paintings of animals and humans. Identifying symbols is difficult, so they have been overshadowed by the undoubtedly remarkable artistic implications inherent in figurative representations. Yet a surprising degree of both spatial and temporal continuity has been found in the wide variety of non-figurative sign types. Remarkably, this graphic code has remained in use over a period of 20,000 years. The 26 specific signs may provide the first glimmers of evidence that a form of writing was used by these ancient humans shortly after their arrival in Europe, or they may have brought this practice with them as well. If the hypothesis is correct, we should think that the creative explosion occurred tens of thousands of years earlier than scholars thought.


Aviform
Circle
Claviform
Cordiform
Crosshatch
Cruciform
Cupule
Dot
Finger Fluting
Flabelliform
Half-Circle
Line
Negative Hand
Open Angle
Oval
Pectiform
Penniform
Positive Hand
Quadrangle
Reniform
Scalariform
Serpentiform
Spiral
Tectiform

It must be admitted that this is not a written language, however, it is clearly a form of communication. Symbols have been found that appear very often as a recurring motif, even on the skeleton of a young woman - dating back 15,500 years and discovered near Bordeaux, in St.Germain de la Riviére - who wore a necklace made of deer teeth.



Three of those teeth are marked: 'II ' on one, 'III ' on another, and 'X II ' on the third. In short, the idea of a form of writing, or rather symbolic representation, in remote ages and in places far apart, from Europe to Africa, America to Australia, no longer seems so peregrine.

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VERBA VOLANT SCRIPTA MANENT

Writing that does not take close contact

With the spoken word he desiccates

Like the plant without water.

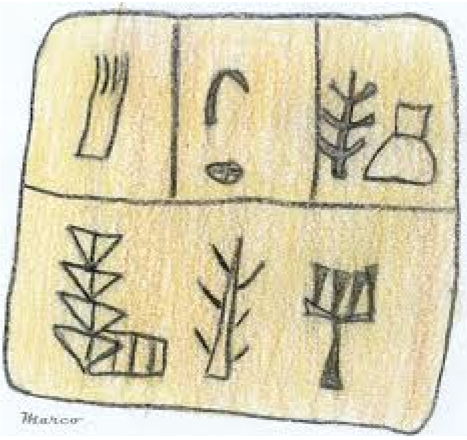
– *Albert Thibaudet*

We have been filled our heads with a supposed beginning of civilization in the Middle East, roughly in the area where Iraq is currently located.

First the Sumerians, then the Assyrians, the Babylonians...

But where did the Sumerians come from?

How had they developed a civilization?



And almost simultaneously, Egyptian society on the banks of the Nile developed.

Nothing strange, agreed, it is known that civilizations develop where conditions allow, so where inhabitants can get water and food.

The same happened with Rome, which first developed as a regional power by breaking free from the Etruscan system of city-states, subduing one by one the cities of the Dodecapolis (Vei, Kaisria, Arretium, Charmas, Coritus, Velzna, Perusia, Ruselle, Tarchuna, Vetluna, Velcha, Velathri).

The *ex-Eastern lux* story then continued with the rise of Christianity and its origin from Palestine, which prompted the view that everything of civilizational value must necessarily come from those regions.

I can be argued that archaeology would also support these ideas. Certainly, however, archaeology digs where it can; it certainly cannot go and sink its research into the bowels of a city or at any rate a densely populated area. Not to mention that many other factors also influence such research: dry or humid climates, materials used, rising or falling coastlines, reuse of materials in later times by other cultures, and so on.

While Egypt, thanks to its climate, has preserved remnants and relics of its multi-thousand-year history, while the Assyro-Babylonian civilization has also handed down to us complete archives of tablets with cuneiform writing, preceded by those with ideographic characters of the Sumerians, nothing similar would have been found in other places, especially in Europe.

But let us go step by step: let us look at a civilization that is certainly as ancient as it is little known to us, the Chinese, whose history of writing is very ancient. As early as the Neolithic age, engravings were made on animal bones and vessels, which can be interpreted as a primitive form of writing. Current studies disagree on whether to interpret them as mere symbols or as an organized form of writing. However, in the most reductive of hypotheses, it would still be a mnemotechnical system. Animal bones and tortoise shells with already organized and mature writing have been found dating back to 1200 B.C. (Shang Dynasty period). This is referred to as Oracular Writing, as one addressed the oracle by carving questions on bones or carapaces, which were then burned to draw answers from the crackling of fire.

These characters, around 1000-500 B.C. (period of the Western Zhou dynasty and that of the Springs and Autumns), became more regular and written on bronze vessels. The handwriting also changed slightly according to the different territories, differentiating into two styles, the large seal and the small seal. The latter style became established throughout China with its unification by the Qin dynasty around 200 B.C., when the different local styles disappeared and a simpler form of writing developed, used by civil servants and therefore called scribal writing. The equivalent of Demotic in Egypt, just so you understand.

This is to understand how the writing was formed: what is valid for the Chinese one is, *mutatis mutandis*, also valid for the others.

Sumerian, a language that does not appear to be related to any other, although it has certain affinities with the Basque and Turkic languages, was spoken in Mesopotamia at least by the fourth millennium B.C.

What about the cuneiform writing of the Sumerians?

This is how it would have developed there, according to archaeologist Denise Schmandt-Besserat, moving from practical to literary forms of accounting:

- 8000 B.C. - tiny clay markings that expressed real values (e.g., a cylinder for a measure of grain, a sphere for an animal). This system was used until 3000 B.C., differentiating the marks for each type of commodity.

- 3500 B.C. - use of spherical clay containers inside which markings were placed so that quantities could not be reduced. Merchants' seals were placed on the containers, imprinting on them the number and types of the markings contained. The markings were imprinted on the clay in such a way as to leave an impression.

- 3300 B.C. - instead of marks, a mark for each quantity of goods is engraved on the clay tablets.

- 3100 B.C. - the abstract number symbol is invented. E.g., to denote eight sheep, instead of engraving eight sheep they engraved a symbol for the number 'eight' and a symbol for 'sheep'.

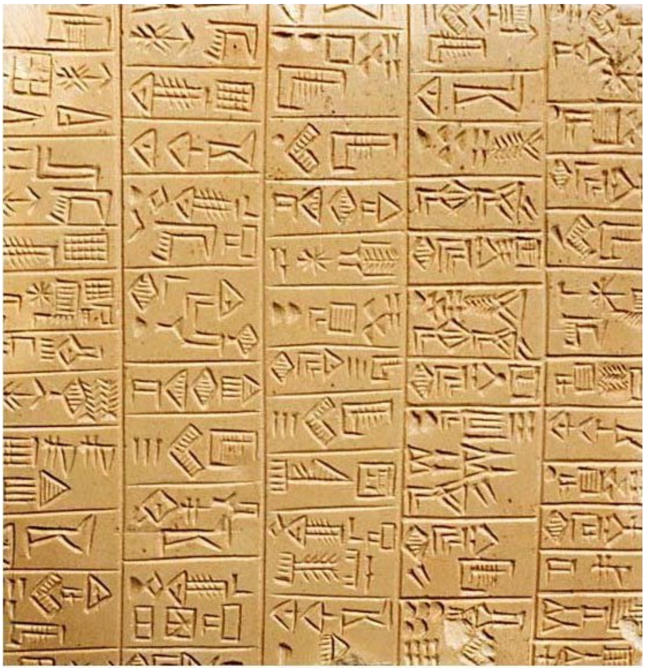
- 3000 a.e.v. - phonograms are engraved, that is, simple signs that, while indicating real objects, nevertheless take on the function of transcribing the sound of speech.

- 2700 B.C. - writing is used in objects laid in tombs, indicating the names of the deceased. The Sumerians believed that uttering the name of the deceased allowed his soul to continue living in the afterlife.

- 2600 B.C. - prayers to the gods also appear in the funerary objects, using articulated phrases with subjects, verbs, and complements

- 2400 B.C. - Transcription of the deeds of a king.

- 2000 B.C. - by now writing is fully developed and is used to draft not only administrative, legal and educational texts but also religious, literary and poetic ones.



Later, around the ninth century B.C., the Greek script would develop, which is presumed to be derived from the Phoenician script, spread to the Mediterranean by Phoenician traders, which was a consonant-only script, composed largely, though not exclusively, of characters defined by straight lines, which may remind us of runic ones.

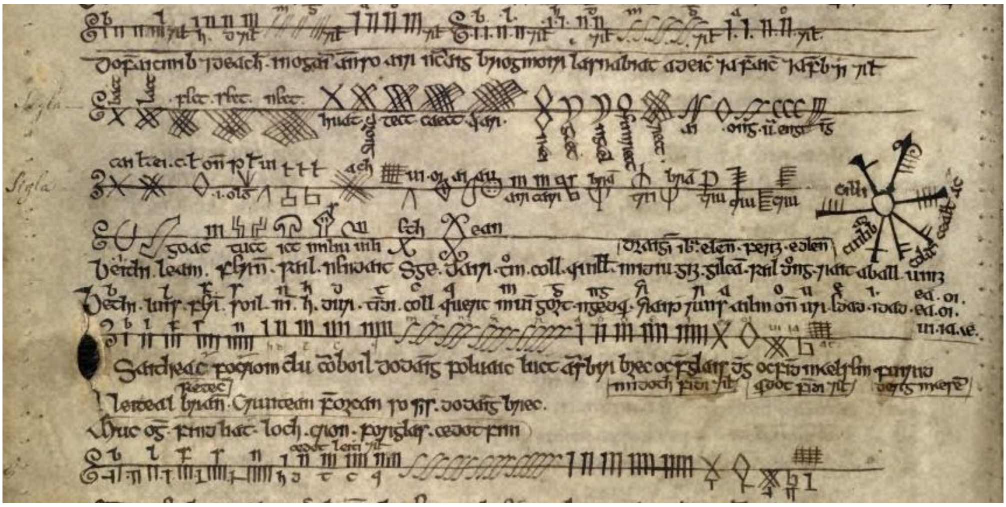
But even before that there were other scriptures.

Between the 16th and 12th centuries B.C., Hittite cuneiform had developed, which was a variant of Akkadian cuneiform from the Paleo-Babylonian period. The Hittites were a people of Indo-European origin living in Anatolia. This script was also used by scribes for different languages, such as Luvio (which also used a hieroglyphic system), Palaic (the language of an Indo-European people of central Asia Minor), Hattic (the idiom of a population of Anatolia dating back to 7000 B.C., which left us the archaeological remains of Çatal Hüyük), Hurritic (used in the kingdom of the Mitanni), as well as Akkadian and Sumerian.

Mention may also be made of Linear A (17th century B.C., a writing from the island of Crete, to this day undeciphered, like the other type of writing, the Cretan hieroglyphic to which the famous Festus Disk belongs), Linear B (a Mycenaean writing from the 15th century b.e.v, deciphered around 1950), and Linear C or more correctly Cypro-Minoan (1600-1000 B.C.), whose archaic characters approach Linear A and are equally undeciphered).

Of the Celts we know that they used an alphabet akin to the Runic, with both symbolic and phonetic valences. But we are left with no written records, except epigraphic ones. Fortunately, in the Middle Ages Irish monks had preserved ancient knowledge that had survived the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. Thus they preserved an ancient manuscript, the *Book of Ballymote*, in which are enclosed various texts, including the *Ogam Treatise*, with about seventy varieties of the ancient Celtic ogam script, also called groove writing. We are in the presence of a kind of alphabet of fifteen consonants and five vowels, with some signs representing double letters and diphthongs. It can be written indifferently horizontally or from top to bottom and vice versa. Ancient Gaelic had declension forms like Latin. Let us add one more curiosity: the ancient name of Ireland was Ibheriu, pronounced Iveriu, recalling an older Iberiu.

Ancient Gaelic histories claim that their ancestors came from Iberia, the ancient name by which Spain was designated. And we know that even today all Spanish-speaking peoples confuse V with B, which have almost the same sound for them. Ogam inscriptions have been found in Portugal (Cachao da Rapa), Spain (Lerida), and the United States (New Hampshire). Evidence of Celtic travel in prehistoric or otherwise historically undocumented times.



But extraordinary finds have also been made in Italy: a 4,000-year-old calendar has been found in Sardinia. The credit goes to Leonardo Melis, author of several books on the Sea Peoples, and Nicola De Pasquale, who had also discovered the abacus calculation system of the Incas (on a 40 basis). It seems that this type of calendar was used not only by the ancient peoples of Sardinia but also by the Celts. Here we find indicated agricultural and pastoral festivals in relation to the moon, sun, solstices and equinoxes. The festivals are in fact almost the same as those of the Celts, and were later partly taken up, under different names, by the Christian calendar, with a plagiarism (*Omnia mutantur, nihil interit* = everything mutates, nothing perishes) reminiscent of that of the gods cleared as saints with their corresponding symbols (Dionysus in St. Denis and St. Bacchus, Moses with the horns of Jupiter Ammon, the virgin Artemis becoming St. Ursula, St. Peter stealing the keys and the shuttle from Janus, Jupiter becoming St. Juvenal, Isis with

Horus in her arms turning into the Virgin Mary, Cadmus becoming St. George slaying the dragon). Not forgetting the cult of Mithra, who was born in a cave 1400 years before Christ, on the night of Dec. 24-25, and died as Christ at the age of 33. At Mithra's dinners bread and wine were eaten, as happened later with the Christian Communion, a form in any case of symbolic theophagy, like the Dionysian homophagy and the banquets of the Essenes; or as, already a thousand years earlier, the Egyptian worshippers of the Sun Aton bowed their heads at the elevation by the priests of the monstrance, which preceded the well-known present-day ray monstrance, adopted by the Catholic Church only in the 15th century by Bernardine of Siena. A curiosity worthy of mention and future study: artifacts have been found in Mesopotamia with symbols similar to those on the aforementioned calendars. So much to ponder and crack one's head.

MAYBE THE BIBLE IS NOT ALWAYS WRONG

Between religion and true science, there is

Neither kinship nor friendship, nor even enmity:

they live in different spheres.

- Friedrich Nietzsche

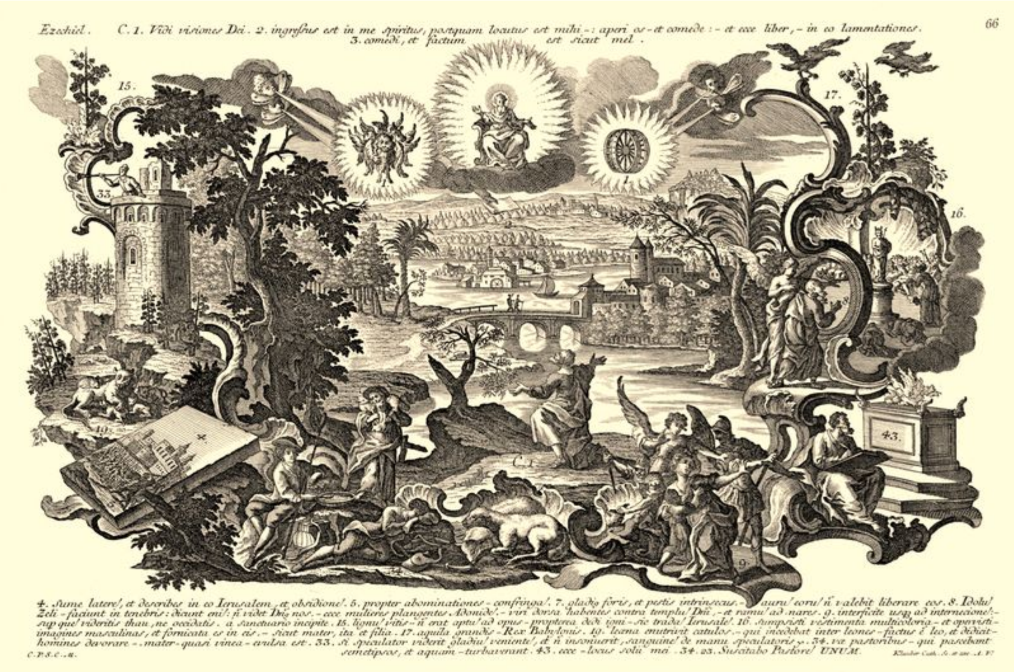
Despite the doubts one may have about the Bible, I must say that I have found data in it that may seem astounding (Ezekiel, 43:12-27):

"This is the law of the temple. All the land around the top of the mountain will be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple. These are the measurements of the altar in cubits, of which each cubit is one cubit and one palm: the base is one cubit high and one cubit wide, with a rim all along its edge of one span. This is the height of the altar: from the base to the ground to the lower platform there are two cubits; the platform is one cubit wide; from the smaller platform to the larger platform there are four cubits; the platform is one cubit wide. The altar hearth is four cubits high, and from the altar hearth rise four horns. The altar hearth is twelve cubits long and twelve cubits wide, that is, a perfect square. The upper platform in its four sides is fourteen cubits long and fourteen cubits wide, with an edge around it of half a cubit; its steps face east. So he said to me, "Son of man, thus says the LORD the LORD: These are the statutes for the altar when it shall be built to offer burnt offerings and sprinkle blood upon it. To the Levitical priests who are of the seed of Sadok, who come near to me to serve me," says the LORD the LORD, "you shall give a bullock as a sin offering. You shall take some of its blood and put it on the four horns of the altar, on the four corners of the platform and all around the brim; thus you shall purify it and make atonement for it. Then you shall take the bullock of the sin offering, and you shall burn it in a designated place in the temple, outside the sanctuary. On the second day you shall offer as a sin offering a goat without blemish, and with it you shall purify the altar as you purified it with the bullock. When its purification is finished, you shall offer a bull without blemish and a ram from the flock without blemish. You shall present them before the LORD, and the priests shall throw salt on them and offer them as a burnt offering to the LORD. For seven days you shall offer a goat every day as a sin offering; a bull and a ram of the flock, both without blemish, shall also be offered. For seven days you shall make atonement for the altar, purify it and consecrate it. When these days are ended, from the eighth day onward, the priests shall offer your burnt offerings and your sacrifices of thanksgiving on the altar, and I will please you," says the Lord, the LORD."

This vision of Ezekiel, a man of undoubted learning who lived in Babylon in the time of Nebukadnezar two hundred years before Plato, recalls the description Plato handed down to us of Atlantis, with even greater detail. It would almost seem that he possessed a detailed plan of it.

Here is the description as it appears in the Bible (Ezekiel, 40):

"And behold, the temple was all enclosed by a wall. The measuring rod that the man held in his hand was six cubits, of one cubit and one palm each. He measured the thickness of the wall: it was a reed, and the height a reed. Then he went to the door facing east, climbed the steps and measured the threshold of the door; it was one reed wide. Each room measured one reed long and one reed wide, and from one room to another there were five cubits: the threshold of the porch from the atrium side of the door itself, toward the inside, was also one reed. He measured the doorway atrium: it was eight cubits; the pillars two cubits. The doorway atrium was inward. The rooms of the door to the east were three on one side and three on the other, all three of the same size, as of one size were the pillars on either side. He measured the width of the porch opening: it was ten cubits; the width of the door was thirteen cubits. In front of the rooms was a one-cubit parapet on either side; each room measured six cubits on each side. He then measured the porch from the roof of one room to its opposite; the width was twenty-five cubits; from one opening to the other; the pillars he calculated to be sixty cubits high; from the pillars began the courtyard surrounding the door. From the front of the front door to the front of the atrium of the inner door was a space of fifty cubits. The rooms and pillars had windows with gratings inward, around the door, as well as there were windows around it that faced the inside of the atrium. On the pillars were drawn palm trees. Then he led me into the outer courtyard and I saw rooms and a pavement built around the courtyard; there were thirty rooms along the pavement. The pavement extended to the sides of the doors by an extent equal to the width of the doors: it was the lower pavement. He measured the space from the front of the lower door from east to north to the front of the inner door; it was one hundred cubits. Then he measured the length and width of the door facing north and leading to the outer courtyard. Its rooms, three on one side and three on the other, the pillars, and the atrium were the same size as the first door: fifty cubits long by twenty-five cubits wide. The windows, atrium, and palms were the same size as those of the door facing east. It was entered by seven steps: the atrium was in front. In front of the north porch was the door, as in front of the east one; he measured the distance between porch and porch: there were one hundred cubits. He then led me toward noon: here was a portico facing noon. He measured its pillars and atrium; they were the same size. Around the porch, as around the atrium, were windows equal to the other windows. It measured fifty cubits long by twenty-five cubits wide. It was entered by seven steps: the vestibule stood inward. On the pillars on either side were ornaments of palm trees. The inner courtyard had a portico toward noon; he measured the distance between door and door in the direction of noon; it was one hundred cubits. Then he ushered me into the inner atrium, by the southern portico, and measured this portico; it was the same size. The rooms, the pillars and the atrium had the same measurements. Around the portico, as around the atrium, were windows. It measured fifty cubits long by twenty-five cubits wide. Around it were vestibules twenty-five cubits long by five cubits wide. Its vestibule faced the outer atrium; on the pillars were palm tree ornaments; the steps by which it was accessed were eight. Then he led me to the porch of the inner atrium facing east and measured it: it had the usual dimensions. The rooms, pillars and atrium were the same size. Around the portico, as around the atrium, were windows. It measured fifty cubits long by twenty-five cubits wide. Its vestibule gave onto the outer atrium: on the pillars on either side were ornaments of palm trees: the steps by which it was entered were eight. Then he led me to the northern portico and measured it: it had the usual dimensions, like the rooms, pillars and atrium. Around it were windows. It measured fifty cubits long by twenty-five cubits wide. Its vestibule gave onto the outer atrium; on the pillars on either side were ornaments of palm trees: the steps by which it was entered were eight. There was also a room with a door near the portico pillars; there the burnt offerings were washed. In the atrium of the portico were two tables on one side and two on the other, on which holocausts and atoning and reparation sacrifices were slaughtered. Two more tables were on the outer side, to the north of those entering the portico, and two tables on the other side by the portico atrium. Thus at each side of the porch there were four boards on one side and four boards on the other side: eight boards in all. On them the victims would have their throats slit. Then there were four other boards of square stones, for burnt offerings, one and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide, and one cubit high: on them were laid the instruments with which the burnt offerings and other sacrifices were immolated. Hooks of a palm were attached to the inside all around; on the boards were placed the meat of the offerings. Outside the inner porch, in the inner atrium, there were two rooms: the one next to the northern porch looked to noon, the other next to the southern porch looked to the north. He said to me, 'The room that looks to the south is for the priests who care for the temple, while the room that looks to the north is for the priests who care for the altar: they are the sons of Sadok who, among the sons of Levi, approach the Lord for his service.' He then measured the atrium: it was a square one hundred cubits wide by one hundred cubits long. The altar was in front of the temple. He then led me into the temple vestibule and measured its pillars: they were each five cubits on one side and five cubits on the other; the width of the porch: three cubits on one side and three cubits on the other. The length of the vestibule was twenty cubits and the width twelve cubits. It was entered by means of ten steps; next to the pillars were two columns, one on one side and one on the other."


Ezechiel. C. 1. Vidi visiones Dei. 2. ingreſsus est in me ſpiritus, postquam locutus est mihi –: aperi os – et comede : – et ecce liber, – in eo lamentationes.
3. comedi, et factum est ſicut mel.
66
15.
17.
33.
16.
19.
43.
C. 1.
9.
4. ſume latere', et describes in eo Ierusalem, et obsidione'. 5. propter abominationes – confringa'. 7. gladius foris, et pestis intrinsecus. – auru' eoru' ñ valebit liberare eos. 8. Idolu' Zeli – faciunt in tenebris : dicunt eni': ñ videt Dñs nos. – ecce mulieres plangentes Adonide'. – viri dorsa habentes contra templu' Dñi, – et ramu' ad nares. 9. interficite usq ad internecione': – sup que' videritis thau, ne occidatis. a ſanctuario incipite. 15. lignu' vitis – ñ erat aptu' ad opus – propterea dedi igni – sic trada' Ierusale'. 16. ſumpsisti vestimenta multicoloria – et operuisti – imagines masculinas, et fornicata es in eis. – ſicut mater, ita et filia. 17. aquila grandis – Rex Babylonis. 19. leæna enutrivit catulos. – qui incedebat inter leones – factus ẽ leo, et didicit – homines devorare –. mater – quasi vinea – evulsa est. 33. ſi ſpeculator viderit gladiu' veniente', et ñ insonuerit, sanguine' de manu ſpeculatoris r. 34. væ pastoribus – qui pascebant semetipsos, et aquam – turbaverant. 43. ecce – locus ſolii mei. 34. 23. Suſcitabo Pastore' UNUM.
C.P.S.C.M.

As everyone can see, this is a description that goes into great detail and detailed measurements, just as if Ezekiel had a map or model of it in front of him, with a pedantry of a surveyor or engineer (forgive me these professionals: I recognize that their accuracy has very good reason to be). I must point out that the temple is the same size as the one described by Plato (coincidence?), and it too is surrounded by a wall (coincidence?), inside and outside the temple are countless statues (coincidence?) even though the Jewish religion was and is iconoclastic; around it is a wonderful garden, irrigated by a spring located in the temple, then there is a second wall with a moat and a third wall also with a moat (by now the coincidences are too many!).

Ezekiel and Plato speak of the same place. The two authors employed different systems of measurement: Plato the pleter (m 29.6) and the stadium (m 177.6), Ezekiel the cubit (the Hebrew one ranged from 44.45 cm to 51.8 cm, larger than a palm), however, the overall measurements of the temple coincide, with minor differences determined by rounding and the time elapsed since the temple itself disappeared. One certainly finds some discrepancies on the measurements of the island, but too many years had passed; one cannot expect too much from such an ancient account. And we see the location of the One God, remembering the Jewish conception: in a strict monotheism like that of the Jews, we should not expect to find any location of God in the polar sky as we can find it instead among polytheistic peoples. "Shall I not fill heaven and earth?" is what Yahweh says.

However, since the Jews must, to some extent, have shared the cosmological and geographical ideas of their time, it would not be strange if traces of these ideas were discernible here and there in their sacred writings. Some of these traces are quite curious, and they have attracted the attention of several biblical scholars. Thus someone (William Latham Bevan, *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*), after blindly repeating the axiom that the Jews conceived of the earth as an immense disk supported by pillars, similar to the roof of an oriental house, asserted that they regarded the north as the highest part of the earth's surface, perhaps because of the high mountains there. Someone else (McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical Theological Ecclesiastical Literature*) asserted that the Jews regarded what lay to the north as superior, and what lay to the south as inferior: thus for those who traveled from south to north it was said to "go up," while for those who went from north to south it was said to "go down." In Psalm 75 we read, "For it is not from the east nor from the west, nor from the noon that the elevation comes." Why this singular enumeration of three of the cardinal points and this omission of the fourth?

A plausible explanation is presented to us by Warren: Simply because heaven, the seat of the supreme God, being conceived by all the surrounding nations, if not by the Jews themselves, as in the polar sky, was therefore the sacred abode and it would not have been reverent to assert that the elevation came from the north. It would have been offensive and nonsensical, as if we were saying that from above we are elevated. Therefore, after completing his negative statements, the psalmist added "but God is the one who judges; he lowers the one and raises the other."

A curious trace of the same concept appears in the book of Job, in chapter XXIII. In Old Testament times, Hebrews and Arabs designated cardinal points starting from personal position, "in front" for east, "behind" for west, "left hand" for north and the "right hand" for south. Thus Job, in the passage indicated, complains that he cannot find his divine judge anywhere, east or west, north or south. But, speaking of one of these points, he adds "where God works." This is called the left hand, or north. It seems to be inserted to make the statement particularly emphatic, "I go ... north to where He works, but I cannot find Him." If this apparent location of God seems inconsistent with the idea of God's omnipresence highlighted in other passages, it would be appropriate to remember that the Bible speaks extensively of the omnipresent God dwelling "on high" and that according to the Gospel we are directed to him as "our father who art in heaven." A natural counterpart to this idea of a northern heaven would be the belief that demons came from the right hand, that is, from the south, that is, the quadrant to which Asmodeus (the Iranian Aeshma Daeva) fled when he was exorcised by the angel (Book of Tobiah, VIII, 3). Certainly it cannot be said with absolute certainty that such a belief consciously prevailed among the ancient Hebrews, but with this hypothesis in mind one can find biblical passages that seem to corroborate it. Thus, in the case cited there was such a belief, with great force and beauty of expression, "since [the Lord] is on my right hand [the side exposed to danger] I do not want to be moved." And one may also recall the confident expression in Psalm 121: "the Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shadow at thy right hand." Note also the imprecation, "Let Satan stand at his right hand," and Zechariah's vision, where the devil makes his appearance at the right hand of the one who has come to resist. But just as Satan is revealed from below and from the south, so to Ezekiel the true God is revealed from above and from the north. In this direction was the Holy Mountain of God, the city of the great king, the land of gold, the place where the Lord controlled the earth. The priest officiated before the altar, in the Tabernacle and then in the temple, facing north.

According to the Talmud, King David had a wind harp in front of his bedroom window, through which the north wind woke him every midnight for prayer. It is probably not without significance that in Ezekiel's vision of the ideal temple the chamber prepared for the priests in charge of the altar was the one facing north.

However, another interesting point should be noted. Reading the heavenly descriptions of the ancients, one may wonder how it is possible that while so many peoples agreed that the north was the cradle of humanity, the Hebrew traditions alone placed Eden in the east.

Here is the explanation. The only word in the book of Genesis that relates Eden to the East is Kedem or Qedem. According to the correct translation this term means "which comes before" (in terms of time or space), and is applied to the East by the custom of turning in that direction when pointing to the cardinal points. According to Genesis (XIII:14) it would seem that the Hebrews had acquired this association with the east as early as the time of Abraham, but according to the "custom" of a particular time or of certain people it could mean one cardinal point as well as another. It was simply "the front country." In late historical times for the Jews it was the East, and consequently the West was the "behind" country, the North the left" country, and the South the right country, as mentioned before.

In Egypt, however, the usage was different, namely "front country" or north or south. This cannot be stated with certainty, Egyptologists still being divided on the issue. Among the Akkadians and Assyrians another interpretation prevailed: the right hand was north, the left hand south, and the direction of "front," of course, west. Seen in this light we infer that before the consolidation of ancient Hebrew, in pre-Akkadian times, Qedem, or "front country" could mean either north or any other direction. And there are many reasons to suppose that this was indeed the case. North was the sacred cardinal point throughout the Asian and Egyptian worlds. What seems more natural than to designate the different cardinal points from the standpoint of their position in worship? If one assumes that before the dispersion caused by the mythical flood, sacred ceremonies were celebrated toward the north and that consequently "the front country" meant the north, everything seems logical. So the book of Genesis also conforms to the tradition of all ancient peoples in locating the cradle of humanity in the north. And we therefore read "and the Lord planted a garden in the north country, in Eden." With logical consistency, descending from the heights of the land of Qedem the descendants of Noah then enter the plain in the land of Shinar (Gen. XI. 2). Thus another conundrum is solved, how to get the first settlers of Shinar into the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris, coming from an unidentified Ararat, since the indication "eastward" has always puzzled commentators extremely. Thus one reconciles Genesis II 8 with Ezekiel XXVIII 13, both now referring to the same cardinal point.

Even the difficulty of harmonizing references to the "sons of Qedem" found in the earliest of the Hebrew Scriptures, such as Genesis XXIX. 1 and Job I. 3, is resolved with this interpretation. At the same time it gives us a position for Uz, Job's homeland, which corresponds to Josephus Flavius' statement, "Uz founded Trachontis and Damascus; this country lies between Palestine and Cœlosyria" (*Antiquitates Iudaicae*, I, 6).

This explanation may seem unconvincing; to many it will seem difficult that the same term could take on a different meaning in different eras. Let's look at some other ancient people, though.

MESOPOTAMIA

Enkidu spoke and said to Gilgamesh:
My friend, think again.
You want to embark on a journey
That it should not be done.

- Epic of Gilgamesh, pl. III

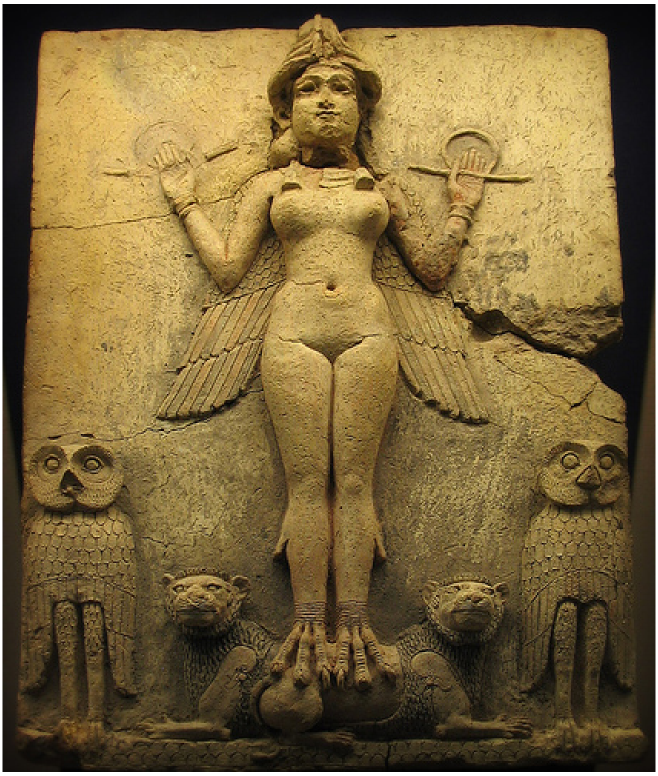
The Akkadians believed in the existence of a remote "mountain of the world, called Kharsak Kurra, which was a support on which the heavens rested and rotated. It was extremely rich in gold, silver and precious stones. An ancient Akkadian hymn sings it thus, "O mighty mountain of Bel, Im-Kharsak, whose summit rivals the heavens, whose root sinks into holiness!"

The Assyrians also recalled the mountain of the world, which the Greeks would later identify with the myth of Atlas, except that the Babylonian Assyrians located the mountain in the east; the Har-Moed (mountain of assembly, passed from Hebrew to Greek as Har Megiddo or Armageddon). And mention should also be made of the Harâ-berezaiti (in ancient Iranian: Watchtower, mentioned in the *Zend Avesta* as the original mountain, center of the universe in the midst of the Airyanem Vaejah, the mythical Iranian homeland where there were two months of summer and ten of winter). Mention should also be made of the Sabei Haranites, the most direct inheritors of the religious traditions of the Mesopotamian world, who celebrated the mysteries of Shemal (or Samael) in their underground temples, built with careful reference to the ancient faith. Their priests, in the act of sacrifice, like all ancient priests, turned northward.

The Chaldeans imagined that the known earth was shaped like an upside-down boat. The concept has very ancient origins dating back to the Akkadian period. But what did the boat look like? Assyrian sculptures reveal that they were round boats (quffa), suitable for navigation in Mesopotamian rivers, a kind of hemisphere. They believed that in the center of the earth, northeast of their country, was a mountain with the function of a pivot of the sky. Near the mountain was a land rich in gold and inhabited by the gods.

This is not the only testimony; in another fragment of an ancient Babylonian text, translated by Archibald Sayce in *Records of the Past*, we are told of an "abode of the gods created by the first human beings," an abode in which they "became great"" and "increased in number "and the place is described there in words exactly corresponding to those in Iranian, Indian, Chinese, and Eddic literature; namely, "in the center of the earth."

If all this were not enough to refute the widespread prejudice that brutal ignorance of geography and over-valuing of self prompted ancient peoples to locate the "navels" of the earth in their respective countries, we shall cite what is probably the world's oldest epic poem, that of Izdhubar, part of the oldest literature of Babylon. These fragments show that the earliest inhabitants of the Tigris and Euphrates basin placed "the center of the earth," not in their midst, but in a distant land, where "the Holy House of the Gods" is located, that is, a land "into whose heart no man has ever penetrated"; a place under the "mighty tree of the world" and beside "complete waters." The Akkad of the Tigris-Euphrates valley is supposedly named after another distant land of the same name. On what basis? First of all, the names Akkad and Sumir (Sumerian) are not Assyro-Babylonian terms, but words borrowed from an older prehistoric language; etymologically, the term Akkad would identify a high country at the northern apex of the earth, as asserted by François Lenormant (*Origines de l'Histoire*); moreover, many Assyriologists believe there were two Akkads, one in Mesopotamia and one much farther north, although no one has yet determined exactly where. We might think of the Arctic areas.



In an apparently very ancient hymn, the goddess Istar is presented as the "Queen of the Mountain of the World," who is then identified with "the axis of heaven" and combined with the "four rivers" of the Akkadian paradise

The Assyrians and Babylonians inherited the Akkadian conception, and one of the titles of the Assyrians' supreme deity was connected to the Holy Mountain. An invocation to him opened thus, "Assur, Mighty God, who dwells in the temple of Kharsak Kurra." An Assyrian hymn spoke of the "festivals of the silver mountain, the heavenly courts." So widespread must have been this idea among the Babylonians, that the prophet Isaiah makes rhetorical use of it by rebuking the arrogance of the king of Babylon and foretelling his fate, seeing it as having already occurred:

"How is it that you fell from heaven, Lucifer, son of the dawn? How is it that you are lying on the ground, lord of peoples? Yet you thought, I will ascend to heaven, on the stars of God I will raise my throne, I will dwell on the mount of assembly, in the remotest parts of the north. I will ascend to the upper regions of the clouds, I will make myself equal with the Most High. Instead you have been cast down into the underworld, into the depths of the abyss!"

Despite so many citations, the character of Har Moed, the mount of assembly, has not been adequately explored.

And also the tree at the "center" or pole of the earth, where "the holy house of the gods" stood.

appears in Akkadian mythology, Evidently this is an ancient and universal concept.

The Babylonian Berossus, reporting on the archaic traditions of Chaldea, attributes extraordinary strength and stature to the first men, which then diminished until a few generations after the Flood. This is a widespread belief concerning the cradle of the human race, supposedly originating in common traditions indicating that man originated from a place where living conditions were absolutely the best possible.

I still remember that a huge amount of Assyrian tablets were found in the ruins of Nineveh, near Mossul. About 100 cubic meters of tablets yet to be rearranged, restored and deciphered. What an amount of knowledge yet to be discovered! This is perhaps the oldest library in the world, organized by the wise men of Assurbanipal. We still have so much to learn.

But let us now see what the traditions of the ancient Egyptians were.

EGYPT

Calculating and taking due account of the days
And the auspicious hours of the stars of Orion
And of the Twelve Deities who rule them,
Behold they join hands palm to palm,
But the sixth among them hangs on the edge of the abyss
In the hour of the devil's defeat.

– Book of the Dead

Let us try to understand what the Egyptians' conception of the world was.

We know that Egypt had represented the cradle of the Hebrew people. As we have seen, the ancient inhabitants of the Nile valley had the same ideas as the Hebrews concerning the location of the true summit of the earth. The fact is even more remarkable, since it is contrary to all natural indications of their country ascending toward the south. But instead the Egyptians conceived the earth as ascending toward the north, so that at its northernmost point it finally joined the sky. Here in the extreme north they placed Ta-nuter, or "land of the gods." On the northern outer wall of the great temple of Ammon at Karnac we see that the god promises King Rameses II the products of that heavenly land, "silver, gold, lapis lazuli and all varieties of precious stones from the land of the gods."

Thus, against all natural indications, the northern hemisphere was considered the realm of light, the south the realm of darkness.

It should be noted that the passage to the chambers of the great pyramid faces north, and all the other pyramids had their openings only on the northern side. It is interpreted that such passages from the burial chamber toward the

polar sky highlighted the belief that from the death chamber one went toward the divine abode.

Parallels are also found in the conceptions of the Akkadians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Hindus and Iranians.

Agreed, these are non-evidentiary hypotheses, only clues.

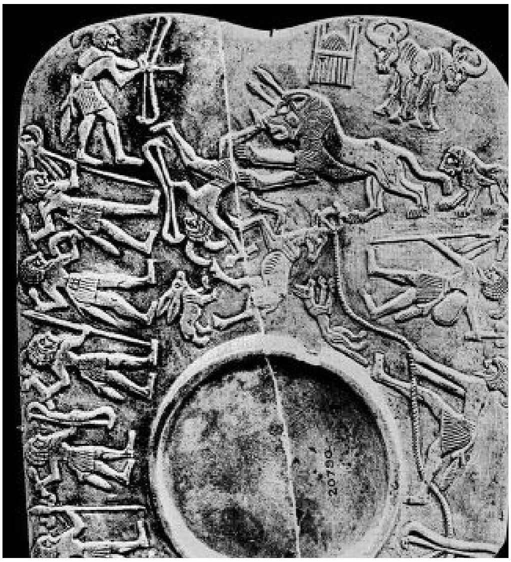
If we accept the theses of Egyptologist Gaston Maspero, the Egyptians often reduced the four cardinal points to only two, using the term east in a sufficiently broad sense to include both east and north and the term west in an equally broad sense to include both west and south. If then Moses, who in his background (and perhaps ethnically as well, as argued by Strabo, Freud, and Ahmed Osman, who in *Moses: Pharaoh of Egypt* identifies him with Akhenaten) was certainly an Egyptian, wrote according to such usage, it would be possible to use Qedem for a northern "front country" and then, without difficulty, use the same term when speaking of the east.

But the Egyptians also had the habit of building temples considering them symbols of the abode of the gods, as also in Greece and Rome. The citadel placed high up in their cities not only had military value but also religious significance.

Although most scholars consider that the earth for the Egyptians was flat, the highest and most sacred part of the earth stood for them to the north, rising up to touch the sky. At the same time at the southernmost end of the earth they had placed another mountain, called "the horn of the world." But these two mountains are nothing but two antipodal polar projections of the spherical earth, the upper one coinciding with the concept of the Mount of the Gods and the lower one with the Mount of the Demons. The Egyptians also had the equivalent of the tree of the center of the world, which will be discussed later.

I recall here the mace, as an attribute of the pharaoh of Egypt, whose admirable, ancient and mysterious civilization always fascinates anyone who approaches it. This is the hedj, the archaic ceremonial and ritual mace used as early as the proto-dynastic rulers, evidently derived from a weapon consisting of a wooden stick and a stone. The ceremonial one originally consisted of a stone pierced in the shape of a disc. a ritual object used in sunrise rites, becoming the symbol of the pharaoh's legitimacy, a kind of scepter.

The oldest representations of this mace can be seen in a tortoise palette, called "of the hunters," reported by Toby Wilkinson in "*The Genesis of the Pharaohs*." It depicts a character waving a mace. And also in very ancient predynastic graffiti we see characters with a mace and their heads adorned with feathers.



Some of the oldest images of this mace-sceptre depict King Scorpio and Pharaoh Menes (or Narmer), believed to be the unifier of Egypt around 3000 B.C. As for King Scorpio, he was depicted next to a scorpion topped by a star. Zodiacal symbolism?

However he was preceded by King Crocodile, Ka (3200 B.C.), Iri Hor , Hedj Hor (on whose tomb scorpions also appear), Pe Hor (or King Bull), Hat Hor, Ny Hor, My Hor. However, there are also other lists of predynastic rulers, so it is impossible to define the chronological sequence of succession. However, the predynastic period is divided into three distinct cultural phases:

Nagada I (4200-3700) Nagada II (3700-3250) Nagada III (3250-3050)

Linked to the last phase III are Dynasty 0 and Dynasty 00 of ancient Egypt. A hypothetical list of the rulers of Dynasty 00 has been compiled by some Egyptologists, but this is only an attempt, since they were reigns before writing. The scribe Manetho had stated that Egyptian history could be divided into several stages. Unfortunately, his work has been lost and we possess only a list of rulers reported by Eusebius of Caesarea, who mentions these periods:

- kingdom of the gods, lasted about 13900 years
- kingdom of demigods, lasted about 5212 years
- reign of venerable spirits, lasted about 5813 years
- reign of mortal kings.

The counting of years according to the Egyptians has always presented difficulties, as they did not have, like many other peoples, a starting date based on an event (birth of Christ, Creation of the World, Hegira, etc.), except in the case of the so-called Stele of the Year 400, discovered by Mariette in 1863, dating from the time of Ramesses II (1300-1200 B.C.) and currently preserved in the Cairo Museum. This stele refers to the founding date of the temple of the god Seth built by the Hyksos at Avaris around 1720 B.C., so it would seem that the Egyptians used two different forms of calculating years, the known one of the years of the reign of each individual pharaoh and that of broader historical periods.

The year 400 would seem to belong to an era called the Menophres era. Nevertheless, it is difficult to interpret this era because of the difficulty of identifying Menophres with any pharaoh. Egyptologists have put forward several hypotheses. If anyone would like to know the most authoritative ones, we recommend looking for a presentation by Pierre Montet (*L'ére de Menophrès, in Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et Belles Artes, 81e année*, no. 5, 1937, pp. 418-426).

On the other hand, it should be remembered that three different calendars coexisted in Egypt, the Nilotic calendar (on the Nile flood cycle), the civil calendar (of 365 days with varying New Year's Day, therefore called vague) and the Alexandrian calendar (with leap years). However, alongside the civil calendar there was also a Sothic calendar (based on the Sirius cycle, called Soped by the Egyptians and Sothis by the Greeks). To complicate matters a bit more, we will add that it seems that the original Egyptian calendar used by the priests was lunar. With 309 lunations you had 25 vague years (with an error of one hour), while with 940 you had 76 Alexandrian years with an error of almost 6 hours. As early as the time of King Den (fifth pharaoh of the First Dynasty) there was a well-structured calendar, but to establish a lunisolar calendar in relation to a sotiacal one required a very long observation of the sky.

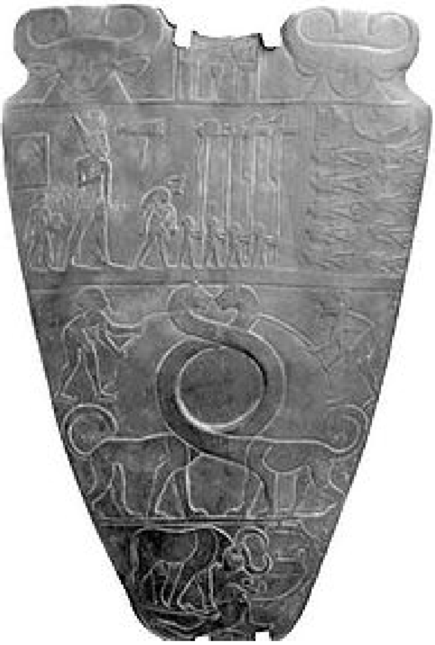
It is sometimes suspected, since most of the information was kept by priests, that Greek translations may confuse months with years. I am sincerely unable to dilute this issue, which I leave to those who know more about it than I do. The reign of the venerable spirits is supposed to be that of the time of the Shemsu Hor, the Followers of Horus (perhaps those who knew its secret?) mentioned in the Turin Papyrus, a document dating back to the 19th Dynasty, which gives precisely, in addition to an introduction on the divine and semi-divine kings of the Predynastic Period, the list of rulers from the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, in one with the number of their years, and sometimes months and days, of reign. It is speculated that they revived Egyptian civilization after some dramatic events, in the name of Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris. It is still hypothesized that the Shemsu Hor belonged to the el-Gerza group, the brachycephalic men who brought a significant evolutionary impetus from Lower Egypt. The gerzean culture or nagada II (3650-3300 B.C.) would then spread to Upper Egypt where they would bear the name Horus.

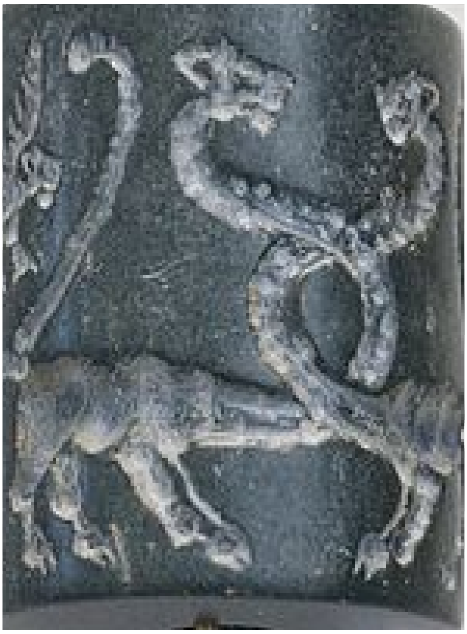
The various cultures of Upper Egypt formed, after various clashes for supremacy, a single kingdom, whose rulers would defeat the Delta rulers by achieving unification with Lower Egypt. Egyptologists distinguish different phases of the predynastic period (Badarian, Amrazian in the south and the Gerzean further north). As early as the Badarian phase, glass was worked, imitating turquoise in admirable form. Barley seeds have also been found dating back to 4000 B.C., but this is a species that must have taken a long time to go from wild to domestic, so the chronology of agriculture must be even older. From that period subsists the first endless vine, made of ivory. From the Amratian period we are left with strange evidence: statuettes of dolichocephalic individuals, with generally black, straight or slightly wavy hair, almost never curly, some beardless, others bearded. They would appear to be two different human races. In the Gerzean phase we see very accurate flint workmanship, Some have compared the Badarians to the Vedda and Dravidians, and the Amrazians to the Ainu.

But Egypt has always been such a vast source of mysteries that sometimes we do not remember them, fascinated by this stupendous culture. As early as the First Dynasty, the tombs of notables were built of stone covered with mud bricks, furniture (beds, trunks, chairs) was commonplace, linen cloth was expertly woven and dyed, in short, all indications of an already advanced civilization. Around 3100 B.C. dates the earliest example of hieroglyphs: it is the palette celebrating the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt by King Narmer, identified with Menes (1st Dynasty). These hieroglyphs, some 3,000 pictographs, will be the same ones used for 3,000 years. Among the various divine bulls, such as Mnevis and Bukhis, the best known is Api, also representing the king's strength. Not for nothing was the pharaoh called the Mighty Bull and wore a bull's tail hanging from his belt in ceremonies. Recall that rulers celebrated the "Sed festival" and that "sed" in the Egyptian language meant "tail." Predynastic finds also include a tablet with men (hunters ?) with a hound's tail. And we must not forget the depiction of a shaman, precisely with a tail, in the Altamira caves (13000 B.C.). We learned from Diodorus Siculus that women, in Nicopolis, could visit the new Apis, in which the spirit of Osiris dwelt, for 40 days. On that occasion they would lift their garments obscenely displaying themselves for the purpose of obtaining fecundity. Perhaps from this strange ritual came the myth of Pasiphae and the

Minotaur. In any case it was widespread not only in Egypt but also in the Aegean-Anatolian area. Then a little thought should also be given to the zodiacal correspondences. A strange, totally inexplicable fact must be pointed out: in correspondence with every change of zodiacal era there is a period of crisis: when we enter Taurus we have the first intermediate period covering the years of Egyptian history, which, indicatively, range from 2200 B.C. 2000 B.C.to , representing a phase of the break-up of central power in favor of the nomarchs, the provincial governors. A combination? At the end of the age of Aries (the mystic lamb?) there was the transition to Christianity. Now we are coming to Aquarius. We are neither catastrophists nor apocatastic, however, the thing is strange. And we remember Wirth's sacred series, with the disappearance of the Lion symbol in the era of the supposed disappearance of Atlantis....

In any case, I do not want to report only the hypothesis of a culture imported into Egypt from other distant and unknown lands, so I feel it is my duty to also set forth, again succinctly so as not to overburden the possible reading of our unlikely readers, the opinion of Toby Wilkinson, a distinguished Egyptologist who has the undoubted merit of having participated in archaeological expeditions to the Egyptian sites of Buto and Memphis, as well as to the eastern desert located between the Nile Valley and the Red Sea. Here he surveyed numerous rocks covered with ancient graffiti. He, in his book *The Genesis of the Pharaohs*, countered the notion that Egyptian civilization was generated by external inputs, possibly from the Red Sea coast as apparently Mesopotamian-inspired stone carvings would seem to suggest, arguing instead that this civilization was due essentially to the country's indigenous inhabitants. Reversing the picture that would see the Egyptian civilization inspired from outside, ours argues instead that as early as the Badaric phase one finds the first motifs of expression that would later be found developed fully in the Pharaonic culture. He sees in the desert rock art graffiti some mace-wielding chiefs with their heads covered by a red crown, a forerunner of the pharaonic one, images of shamans that seem to foreshadow later Egyptian deities, archaic depictions of the bull, as well as hunting scenes and representations of ships that foreshadow the pharaoh's final journey to the afterlife. All clues that would point to a genesis of Egyptian civilization in the nomadic hunting and herding groups of the desert. Wilkinson reconstructs, perhaps fantastically, the lives of these archaic inhabitants of the country, while also attempting to define the primitive local religiosity.





So for him there is no foreign input; all Egyptian civilization would be the result of the development of Egypt's Neolithic primitives.

But not all Egyptologists are of this opinion. Among them we note David Rohl, who argues that Wilkinson would pull by the hair of his so-called evidence, which would refer to another prehistoric phase. It can be seen from the above illustrations how the Egyptian Narmer tablet from 3100 B.C. (left) and an Uruk cylinder from 4000-3000 B.C. (right) show the exact same pattern. In addition, archaeologist Flinders Petrie, in the early 1900s had discovered that some skeletons found at predynastic sites in Naqada proved the presence of two different races, one of which was called a "dynastic race," identifying it with the "Servants of Horus." This race differed in greater bone structure and cranial capacity. The various artifacts found there and the numerous predynastic cave paintings of boats would also have indicated a foreign origin. Petrie believed that they were a race of invaders from Mesopotamia who had generated the seemingly sudden birth of Egyptian civilization. Opinions are many and often discordant. To the unhappiness of those who read me, I will say that Rohl established a new chronology of ancient Egypt, in opposition to the traditional one, including using a methodology from archaeoastronomy and clarifying that an eclipse recorded at the time of Akhenaten could only have occurred in 1012 B.C., thus shifting the reign of the heretical pharaoh by 350 years. The innovation of his chronology would allow the identification of many ancient peoples mentioned in the Bible. Among other things, he places the biblical Garden of Eden in a region between the Caspian Sea and Lake Orumiye, the largest salt lake on earth, in the area where Zoroaster would have been born. Academic Egyptologists disagree with him, however.

If they can't get their act together, don't hope we can.

Also worth mentioning is the story of the 6th Dynasty pharaoh Nitocris, compiled by the Egyptian priest Manetho, of which this fragment is fortunately preserved in a text by Eusebius: "A woman, Nitocris, reigned; she had more courage than the men of her time and was the most beautiful of all the women of her time, blond, with vermilion cheeks." The legend also tells of a lost slipper, anticipating in ancient times the fairy tale of Cinderella.

I want to add again that the petroglyphs in question had been noticed in the early 20th century by Arthur Weigall, an Egyptologist who was already a collaborator of the famous Flinders Petrie and Howard Carter, and also noted later by Hans Winkler. Several graffiti depicting "square" ships had been discovered, for which an influx of peoples landed on the shores of the Red Sea had been hypothesized. The shape of the ships is reminiscent of some votive bronzes found in Sardinia and belonging to the Shardan civilization. Here the chicken-and-egg dilemma appears: since the Shardana had served the pharaohs as mercenaries, are the bronzes or the petroglyphs (which are always difficult to date anyway) older? Played against Wilkinson's hypothesis is the fact that the Egyptians considered desert nomads foreigners, those who he says would have been at the foundation of Egyptian civilization.

How to talk about Egypt without mentioning the Great Pyramid? Far too many have written about it, so I will refrain from the usual descriptions and various comments, which are always the same in the end. The real differences between the various authors consist in the dating (ranging from 5,000 to 15,000 years ago, if not beyond), a subject I do not feel able to address, and in whether or not it is attributed to Cheops. The certain things that have been handed down to us are that it was covered with red-plastered slabs (ochre oematite), that externally there were a variety of hieroglyphic inscriptions, and that it is still unclear how they were built with the means available anticamete. Derll the orientation and the so-called air ducts have been discussed at length, so I will not even mention them. If anyone wants to get an overview of the pyramid of Cheops, I recommend reading physicist André Pochan's book *L'énigme de la Grande Pyramide*. In addition to reporting the accounts of the most ancient authors, from Herodotus to Diodorus Siculus, from Manetho to Masudi, from Maqrizi to Caviglia and Vyse, he also presents a singular phenomenon, which is detected on the north and south faces of the Great Pyramid, called by him "the lightning bolt".On the day of the equinox, at sunrise, the south face is half illuminated, starting from the west edge, while the other half remains in shadow. The phenomenon becomes more pronounced until the solstice. At sunset the phenomenon is reversed. Pochan's explanation is that the faces are not flat, but consist of two planes forming an angle of 27°. From this concavity of the faces comes this strange anomaly, which is generally never mentioned by Egyptologists, who attribute the shape of the faces of the pyramid to piles of sand or erosion by stone looters. No comment.

It would also be 'obligatory to rant about the Sphinx. I recognize no obligation on my part to anyone. So I really don't know whether it dates back to 2500 B.C. or the end of the last ice age, nor do I venture to make any wild guesses.

Everyone knows the story of Oedipus and the Sphinx; who knows if the Sphinx of the Greeks and the Egyptian Sphinx are the same myth. Who knows. For the edification of readers, I will say that in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples there is an Apulian crater in which a Silenus is depicted handing the Sphinx a bird enclosed in the fist of his hand; it would seem to go back to a Greek tale, in which an incredulous and skeptical peasant had gone to Delphi with a small bird in his hand, asking the oracle if he had a living or non-living thing with him, ready to kill the bird in case the answer was the former.

AND IN AMERICA ?

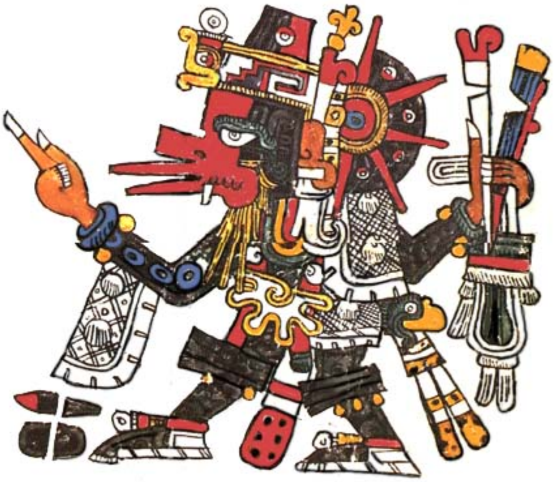
Perhaps America was never discovered after all.

I personally would say it was barely glimpsed.

– Oscar Wilde

I will just mention the beliefs of the American peoples, of which there are many and of which we have rather little left, thanks to the careful work of destruction of their cultures by the Europeans.

The Aztecs believed that the cradle of the human race was located in the remote north, on a high mountain whose summit was shrouded in clouds. This was the residence of the god Tlaloc, the god of water and fertility. The first man, Quetzalcoatl, after ruling as king of the Golden Age in Mexico, had returned, following divine instructions, to Tlapallan, the primordial paradise located to the north, to obtain immortality. Many pyramids were dedicated to his worship, as a symbol of the sacred mountain of Aztec tradition, located "in "the center of the middle country. However, the most important site of his worship was on the summit of Mount Tlaloc , 4100 meters high on the eastern edge of the Valley of Mexico.



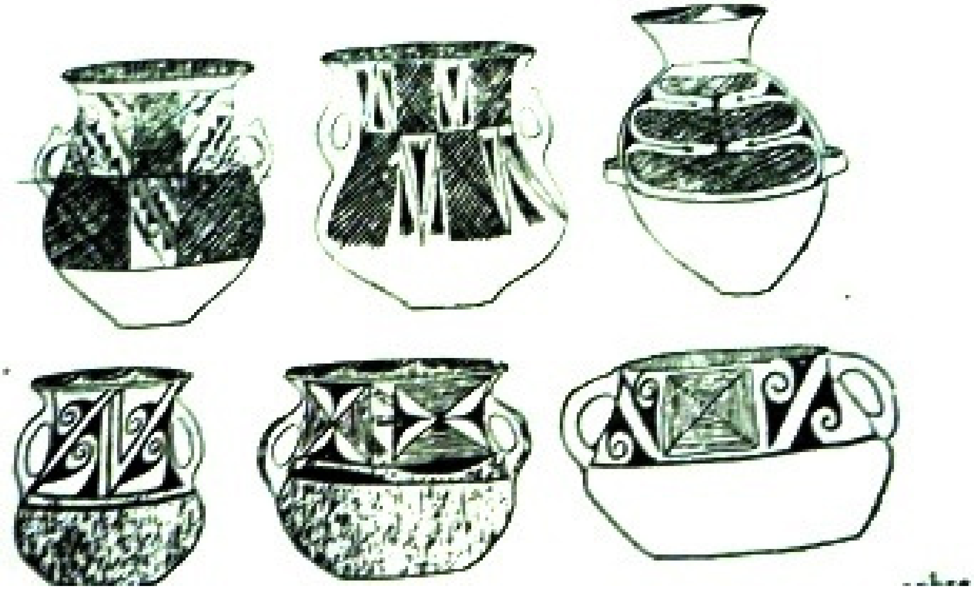
The idea of a navel of the earth is also found among the ancient Incas, as well as among the Chickasaw of Mississippi. This legendary idea of a mysterious, primordial, holy, heavenly center of the earth appears in all ancient peoples, connected with the "center of heaven," the divine paradise.

But now my faithful crows have come to offer me (and you) an unexpected treat.

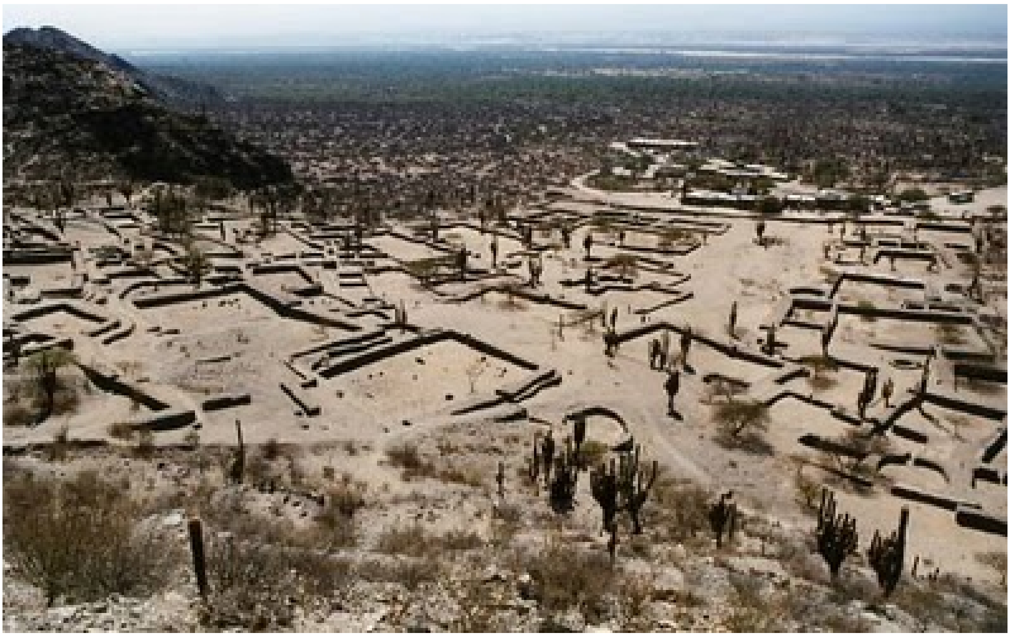
In 1940 in Nevada, in the Great Lakes area, a partially mummified body, called the Spirit Cave Mummy, was found in a cave, with moccasins made from the skins of three different animals and finely crafted mats. Carbon 14 established an age of more than 10,000 years, while the skull indicates a Europoid origin. Then were found, in 1996, the remains of the nearly complete skeleton of Kennewick man in Washington state (over 9,000 years of antiquity), also of Europoid type. This was a man about 50 years old, between 1.70 and 1.76 m tall, with a leaf-shaped serrated stone arrowhead lodged in his hip. This type of projectile was typical of the Cascade phase, an ancient Native American culture between 10,000 and 5,000 B.C., which proves the coexistence of natives with Europoids. According to anthropologist Joseph Powell of the University of New Mexico it would belong to a type akin to the Ainu.

Several scholars believe that Europoid-type populations arrived in the Americas about 15000 to 20000 years ago, probably from Beringia or perhaps even from the west coast of Europe, skirting the polar ice shelf, which then extended much farther south. These peoples would then have been massacred or absorbed by subsequent invasions of Mongolid peoples in much the same way as happened to the Ainu in Japan. But then the crucial question is this: where did these Europoid-type populations (Caucasian or otherwise) who came all the way to Japan and the Americas come from?

There has been a scholar, Prof. Hermann Munk, deputy director of the *Instituto de Ciencia del Hombre* (Buenos Aires) who has done thorough research on a population half-unknown outside Argentina, the Kilmes. These lived in northern Argentina and maintained a federated relationship with the Incas, who never managed to subdue them, being a very proud and combative race. Prof. Munk, in his work *Kilmes, llave de la primera cultura mundial*, begins by analyzing the culture of the Kilmes, the most important tribe of the Diaguitas (Quechua term that meant "distant people") in all cultural aspects, construction, economy, clothing, pottery, religion, language, etc. until their disappearance caused by the Europeans. He then observed the presence of related peoples on all continents, shaping a framework of culture extended over the whole earth, the first world culture, the mother culture.



Hermann Munk, philologist and runologist, is an almost unknown researcher. Born in Austria, or rather in Tyrol, como he proudly told me, in 1922, he had moved to Argentina in 1979. There he was director of the *Instituto de Ciencia del Hombre* and the *Instituto* Paraguayo *de Ciencia del Hombre* in Asunción, Paraguay, actively collaborating in the research and scientific missions of Prof. Jacques de Mahieu (whose research on the presence of the Vikings in South America is remarkable). The Kilmes were peoples settled in northern Argentina, where ruins dating back to the pre-Columbian era of the ancient city of Kilmes, in the province of Tucuman, later abandoned due to struggles with the Spanish, still exist. The oldest ruins would date, according to most scholars, to 6,000 years ago.



The Kilmes lived by hunting and farming, for the irrigation of which they demonstrated a good knowledge of hydraulic techniques. They cultivated maize, quinoa, potatoes, peanuts, gourds and beans, while raising the various American camelids. Their territory was never included in the Inca empire, although the Incas enjoyed the right of passage for their troops, which was essential for defending the southernmost domains. They were known to be a proud and warlike people, and well realized by the Spanish when they wanted to subdue them and had to fight for over 200 years. Perhaps also because of their indomitable and fighting character they were never subdued by the Incas. When they went down to war, they put a feather crown on their heads and carried a painted shield. Chiefs used large, ornate bronze axes as a symbol of command, while warriors used bows and arrows, slingshots, javelins and clubs. As far as is known, at least some of the men had beards, the hairs of which were plucked out with small copper pliers. Their religion was primitive, worshipping the sun, but they also commended themselves to Apu, a tutelary genius of the earth and protector of men, who used to dwell in the high Andean mountains. Another of their deities was Vati (whose name is reminiscent of the Old Norse "vaettr," meaning spirit) who fought against his antagonist, Chiki, the corruptor (which is close to the Indo-Germanic root "skei," for evil, bad, crooked). Thunder and Lightning were considered secondary deities, forming with the Sun a trinity called Tanga-Tanga.

Recall that several very light-skinned tribes, often also with blond hair, have been found in unlikely places: for example, the Urukehu in Polynesia, the Orejones in Easter Island, and others in the Americas, such as the white Jibaros, known to be headhunters who then shrank.

Very similar usages and customs appear in places far apart, just as similarities and common roots appear in many different languages. It cannot always be coincidence if there is no onomatopoeic origin in words. Through painstaking etymological research, Munk was able to decipher and verify more than five hundred words of this language, which is called kakán or cacán in the ancient Conquistadores' documents, and whose etymology goes back to the Indo-Germanic "kleu" (hearing) and the Old Norse "hlodh" (sound).

It is not appropriate here to report all the terms analyzed, so we refer directly to Munk's book. Their clay urns show decorations, in the colors white red, black and ochre, geometric designs very similar (sometimes even the same) to European ones of more than 3,000 years ago, and figurines have been found, also in clay, very similar to the well-known "Venus of Willendorf," probably images of Pachamama, Mother Earth, to whom the deceased were entrusted, mummified and in the fetal position.

Mummification was done first by extracting the internal organs, then desiccating the corpse and filling it with soil, feathers and other materials to restore its original appearance. Finally, the skin received special treatment to give it a more lively appearance, and the head was covered with a mask and wig of human hair. Of note was the discovery of mummies with blond or red hair in Peru. These are the so-called mummies of Paracas, from the place of their discovery in a royal necropolis. Most were then darkened, both skin and hair on the instructions of a military government that extolled indigenous nationalism, thus denying and erasing any possible intrusion of Europoid peoples prior to the official discovery of the Americas.

The mummification process is very old and dates back at least 5,200 years, while that of Egyptian mummies dates back 4,900 years. One mummy, found still in good condition, showed an individual at least 1.82 m tall, with light-colored hair and a North European-type skull. Several megalithic stones, the largest of which is three meters tall, decorated with symbolic carvings, similar to those found in northwestern Europe, were also found. Archaeologists have estimated, for these megaliths, an age of 6,000 years. In one cave, located in Salta Province, there are several figures including armed men with axes, one with a double axe, and some figures with shields, bearing different badges, probably the symbols of clans, as at the Incas and Aztecs, much like the noble coats of arms in Europe.

Munk also found, near a complex of forty fortified buildings, a group of mounds that formed an eight-pointed star, known by the ancient and strange toponym Troya. How else to explain it than by the Indo-Germanic root "drou," from which arises the sense of "fortified place," valid for both Homeric Troy and this site?

But where did these people come from? One always thinks of the Behring Strait, about 15,000 years ago, however, the math does not add up, because South America was already populated 50,000 years ago by primitive groups of hunters and gatherers. Munk hypothesizes, based on local traditions, that they came down from the Titicaca area, whose ancient name was Chukahua (Gothic "skugg-wa" for mirror and Indo-Germanic root "uod" for water, later transformed into wasser, water, voda in different European languages), thus "mirroring water," a truly apt description for this unusual lake, located almost 4,000 meters above sea level). Our researcher found an impressive number of correspondences between Kilmes culture in particular and pre-Columbian cultures in general with prehistoric and protohistoric European ones: representations of bearded men, feline masks similar to gorgons, the depiction of double snakes similar to the Joermungandr of Midgard and those of Mercury's caduceus, the lion (or the puma, its American equivalent) as a symbol of strength and valor.

Symbol of command was a staff in the shape of a two-handed axe, akin to Thor's double hammer, Zeus' lightning bolt, and Teshub's axe. The dead were washed and wrapped in broad cloaks, after having their nails cut (as the ancient Germans did), while women wept and despaired, like prefics in ancient Rome. Large banquets were held to greet the departure of the deceased, and a small piece of gold, silver or copper was placed under the dead man's tongue to enable him to face the afterlife journey. Just like the obolus reserved for Charon; note that the Chinese also had the custom of placing a sheet of obsidian or jade in the mouth of the deceased.

Munk found common origins in Indo-European and Semitic languages: father in Aramean was abba, in Old Arabic abu, while in Gothic aba means husband, afi means grandfather in Old Norse, similar to Latin avus and Swabian abi. And, to take another example of his, shalom in Hebrew and salam in Arabic mean peace, while in Old Norse saela means health, like Latin salus, and in Gothic we find selei, meaning luck. These would thus be language groups derived from a common root, developed from 40,000 years ago with the appearance of the Cro-Magnon genetic group.

Munk then had also considered the spread of different blood types, according to which there is evidence of the initial spread of type A blood, typically Indo-European, and type B blood, of the brown race, from Europe to Africa via Egypt (in predynastic times, 7000-5000 B.C.), and then to Polynesia, Australia and America. Later, around 3000 B.C., there would be a second wave of migration from Siberia, from which derived the Ainu in Japan and Korea, with a subsequent third shift giving rise to new race mixtures in North Africa, Central Asia, Indonesia and Micronesia. A fourth migration, of peoples originally from northern Eurasia, of the Cro-Magnon type, had come all the way to America across what was then the Isthmus of Behring.

Other migrations across the Pacific first and across the Atlantic later followed. According to the Tyrolean scholar, blood group A arose about 10,000 years ago within the Cro-magnon genetic group, starting with proto-group 0 in a Scandinavian or circum-Atlantic area. This human group of proto megalithic culture radiated into both the Old and New Worlds, as evidenced by various artifacts (stone knives, hooked spearheads, decorated slingshots, command sticks, etc.). They would thus have descended into the

Iberian Peninsula and West Africa, toward the mouth of the Nile, from which one branch would have continued its movement toward East Africa and the other crossed Eritrea into the Arabian Peninsula, heading toward Hindustan and the Sunda Islands. To the north, one current would have headed toward Japan, the Kuril Islands, and the Aleutians, passing into Alaska and then southward through the Americas to Tierra del Fuego. Another branch would have sailed toward Micronesia to Hawaii, from where it would have carried into present-day Mexico. Everywhere they would have mixed with different genetic groups. About 7,000 years ago there would have been another major migratory irradiation to Eastern Europe, Siberia, Camciatka, Alaska and Greenland. Another direction would have gone to eastern Turchestan, Mongolia and northern China, where - for unknown reasons - they would have engaged in microlithic technology. After 2,000 years another migration, proceeding from southeastern Europe (where blood types A and B had already intermingled), passing through the mouth of the Nile would have reached Madagascar and crossing present-day Iran, India and Indochina would have touched the Philippines.

These migratory waves of Cro-magnon men would have brought many innovations everywhere: over hoods with very primitive tools a more mature culture was found, with better stone-working techniques, decorative elements, a protoreligion. Ours does not shy away from mentioning *the vexata quaestio* of Atlantis. According to him, the Atlanteans were different, born from a culture that had spread from 'northwestern Europe, so it flourished in Helgoland as in Tartessus, in Djerba as in other places, wherever it had radiated coming from the north.

In succinct summary these are the results of the research of Munk, whose extremely interesting book is currently available in Spanish and German.

THE MOUNTAIN OF PARADISE

Abashed the devil stood
and felt how awful goodness is

- John Milton

There are two subjects that appear universally in all representations of the world; the Mountain, which will be discussed now, and the Sacred Tree, which we will see later. The Chinese earthly paradise is described as being located not only "in the center of the earth," but also directly below the heavenly Palace of Shang-ti, which is identified with the North Star, and which is also sometimes called the "Palace of the Center." Most likely, the historic naming of China, "the Middle Kingdom," was originally a sacred name, commemorative of that primordial central country that the Akkadians called Akkad, the Iranians Kvanîras, and the Norse Idavollr. This supposition also finds convincing confirmation in Chinese burial rites.

Greek and Roman myths concerning the "mountain of the world" were also numerous, although they became somewhat entangled over time. Some, such as Aristotle, identified it with the Caucasus, asserting that its height was so prodigious that after sunset its summit remained illuminated during a third part of the night, and again that it brightened in the morning a third part before sunrise. It almost sounds like hearing about Arctic days and nights. More often the Mount has been identified with Atlas, even taking its name; Proclus Lycus Diadocus, quoting Heraclitus, said, "Its size is such that it touches the ether and casts a shadow five thousand stadia long. From the ninth hour of the day it hides the sun." In Strabo's account this mountain appears described with the mythical characteristics of an earthly paradise. The olive trees were of extraordinary quality, and there were seven varieties of excellent wine. The Greek geographer informs us that the bunches of vines were a cubit long and the vine trunks sometimes so large that barely two men could have embraced one. Herodotus describes the mountain "of narrow base and round on all sides, but so high, by all accounts, that it is not possible to see its summit, for the clouds never leave it, either in 'summer or in winter: the natives of the place claim that it is the pillar that supports the sky. From this mountain the natives got their name, for they call themselves Atlantes. It is said that they do not feed on any living thing and that they never dream."

Virtually everywhere in the ancient world one encounters this idea of a mountain of the gods, as if it were a primitive myth belonging to all humanity. How did it happen that the same myth of the far north as the apex of the earth and the polar sky as the true heaven spread everywhere? Ancient thought must have been formed by referring to how the world was contemplated at the beginning of time.

This, although an indirect clue, appears as convincing as ever.

Some have recognized the Greek myth of Meropia or Meropis (quoted by Theopompus of Chios) as the Asiatic Meru, believing that the sacred expression μέροπες ἄνθρωποι (used by the Greeks to designate humanity) originally meant "the men born of Meru," who would first possess the gift of speech. Such an explanation might support the existence in archaic times of a people who would have led a life of innocence and happiness, characterized by extraordinary longevity (a characteristic in common with biblical accounts and Hindu legends concerning Uttarakuru), under the rule of a king, Merope, of whom it is sometimes said that he had saved men from the flood, as Yima did with the Iranians. Usually this myth is located on the island of Kos, which received the name Meropis, but the island of Sifnos also claimed to be called Meropia because of a similar tradition, and Strabo spoke of a fabled region with the name Meropis, near the country of the Hyperboreans. Merope is also remembered as king of the Ethiopians (=those who seem to have been burned by the sun), the most pious and most virtuous of men, as well as husband of Climene, the mother of Phaeton, and therefore anterior to the catastrophe of the conflagration of the universe (burned precisely by Phaeton with the chariot of Apollo, god of the Sun and his father, plunging into the Eridanus), a catastrophe by which the men of the first age, the golden age, would be exterminated. At this point it is impossible not to remember that the Eliads, his sisters, at his death inconsolably wept tears that were turned into amber, which is known to be found on the shores of the Baltic Sea. And the Eliads themselves became poplars, trees native to the north.

The same name Merope was given to a prophet king of Rhyndakos in Misia, who also received the very significant appellation Makar, "the happy one." All this shows that the paradisiacal myth of Merope belonged not only to the island of Kos, but was also present elsewhere in the Greek world, receiving more than one localization.

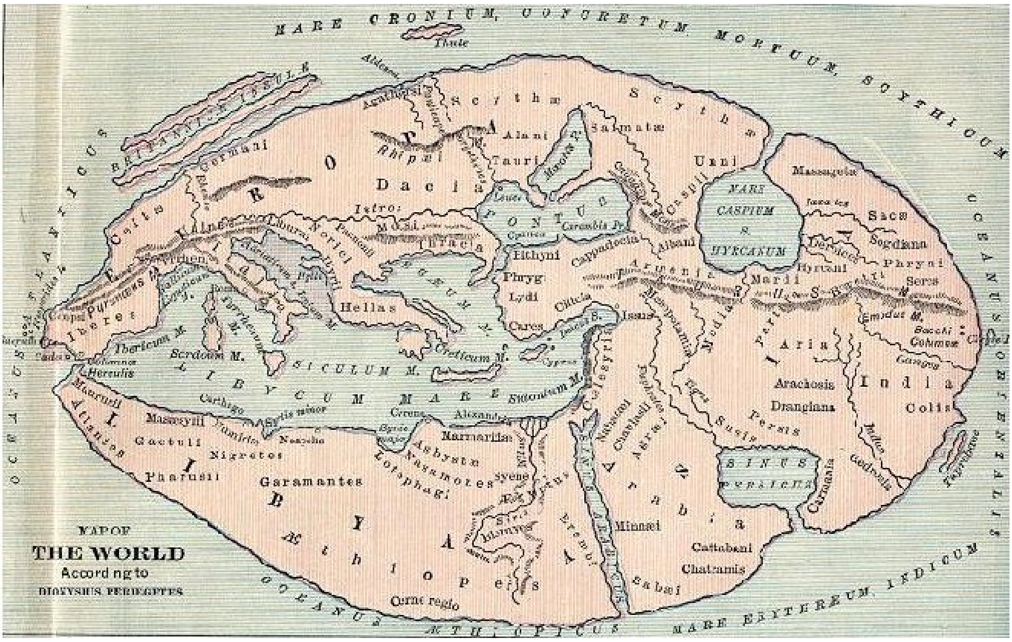
Plato's well-known story of the lost Atlantis, the island that the sea god Poseidon assigned to his son Atlas to rule over, is a fascinating picture of the antediluvian world. Whether this story originated in Egypt, as argued by Plato, or inherited from the Hellenes, however, is of particular interest here for three reasons: first, it was seen that according to the oldest Greek conceptions Atlas stood at the north pole, so it is reasonable to locate his kingdom in the same area. Second, the inhabitants of 'Atlantis have sometimes been identified with the Hyperboreans. Finally, Apollodorus and Theopompus expressly call the lost land Meropia and its inhabitants Meropi; that is, as already mentioned, from Meru.

Much has been fabled about this fantastic country, placing it in America, in the Sea of Azof, or in Persia, as well as in the middle of the Atlantic. In the end, all possible and imaginable hypotheses have been laid out. Only Jean Sylvain Bailly (*Lettres sur l'Atlantide de Platon et sur l'ancienne histoire de l'Asie*, 1779) had come close to the truth, when, considering the perplexities raised by all other opinions, he correctly placed the lost Atlantis in the Arctic Sea.

It should be noted as well that in Hellenic tradition Deucalion, who repopulated the world with his wife Pyrrha after a flood unleashed by Zeus at the end of the Bronze Age, was not Greek, but an inhabitant of a country in the far north, a Scythian. Both were descended from Titans.

And the Scythians, who thought of themselves as children of Zeus, were considered a people much older than the Greeks, if not the oldest people in the world. Moreover, Scythia, like Meru and Harâ-berezaiti, was conceived as a region of high lands from which all the rivers of the earth flowed down. One thus connects the antediluvian Deucalion with the ancestral country located at the pole. Finally, in Greek tradition, the first men lived according to the benevolent laws of Cronos, father of Zeus, enjoying the bliss of the

Golden Age. But it is evident for Strabo and other ancient authors that the seat of Cronos' kingdom was located in the far north.


MAP OF
THE WORLD
According to
DIONYSIUS PERIEGETES
MARE CRONIUM, CONCRETUM, MORTUUM, SCYTHICUM
OCEANUS SEPTENTRIONALIS
MARE ERYTHRÆUM, INDICUM
OCEANUS ÆTHIOPICUS
Thule
Scythæ
Sarmatæ
Alani
Tauri
Dacia
Germani
Celtæ
Iberes
Hellas
Thracia
Pontus
Euxinus
Phryg.
Lydi
Cares
Cilicia
Bithyni
Cappadocia
Armenia
Albani
Uxii
MARE CASPIUM S. HYRCANUM
Massagetæ
Sacæ
Sogdiana
Phryni
Seres
Hyrcani
Bactriani
Aria
Arachosia
Drangiana
India
Colis
Persis
Susis
SINUS PERSICUS
Carmania
Arabia
Minæi
Sabæi
Cattabani
Chatramis
Æthiopes
Cerne regio
Garamantes
Libya
Pharusii
Gaetuli
Nigretes
Masæsyli
Maurusii
Atlantes
Marmaridæ
Nasamones
Lotophagi
Syene
Siculum M.
Libycum Mare
Creticum M.
Sardoum M.
Ibericum M.
Columnæ Herculis
Britannicæ Insulæ
Rhipæi

We have accepted the hypothesis of a subpolar prehistoric area to the north as the cradle of the human race, now the particular characteristics of that primitive dwelling must be considered. If we think of a day and night in a year, we recall that the stars, instead of rising and setting, would have had a seemingly horizontal motion around the observer from left to right. The pole, a motionless point in the sky directly overhead, was naturally supposed to look like the apex of the world, the unchanging seat of the supreme deity. And if, therefore, throughout the duration of the antediluvian world the polar sky was considered the true abode of God, the most ancient postdiluvian peoples, though scattered over the earth could not have easily forgotten it. Standing at the earth's pole, an observer would have been not only below the center of the celestial hemisphere, but also directly at the center of the surface of the earth's hemisphere. Only there would the heavenly bodies move in horizontal planes around him, to whom it would seem as if he were standing on the center point of the entire earth. Any movement of a few kilometers in any direction from this polar position would have confirmed this first impression.

If, therefore, the primordial homeland stood near the pole, the descendants of the first men, once they moved away from such a distinctive country, could never forget it as the center and navel of the whole earth.

It should be reiterated that the idea that at the pole twelve months are lived in darkness is wrong, for in reality less than one-fifth of the year is spent in such conditions, while more than four-fifths enjoy light. A primitive dwelling in this part of the world would have been remembered by the descendants of the first man as a land of beauty, the home of the sun. Arctic explorers found it impossible to describe the nocturnal splendors of the northern lights in those regions, the sky sometimes seeming veiled by flickering bands of light and arcs of light, almost dancing flames; so it may be assumed that, once exiled from such a place, mankind would have looked back on it as a seat illuminated by supernatural light, a place worthy of being the abode of the immortal gods. Finally, assuming the prevalence of a uniform temperate climate in the region, we would find the biological conditions for having life forms other than those of today, lush flora and fauna. Under such conditions humans themselves might well have greater stature, strength and longevity.

If it were possible to prove that the Arctic has always been covered by ice as it is now, it would be pointless to consider for even a moment the hypothesis that the cradle of the human race was located there. Probably the popular belief that from time immemorial the far north has been the region of eternal frosts was one of the main reasons why just now this new theory is being pondered.

Of all the hypotheses considered, the most logical seems to be that of heat contributed to the circumpolar zones by the Gulf Stream. Thus the thesis of a primordial near-pole zone with a temperate polar climate is acceptable.

We are all inclined to think of a six-month uninterrupted night at the pole, with daylight lasting a little over five months, while all the rest of the year the region would be shrouded in darkness. If this were the case, it would certainly be an unpromising region in which to carry out the search for a heavenly place.

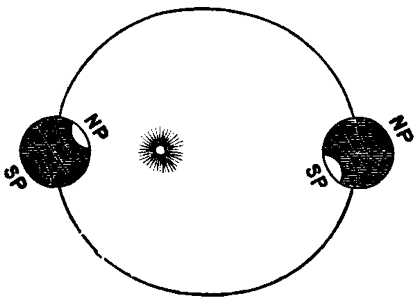
But the six-month reign of darkness is only a figment of the imagination. The error lies in considering all points where the midnight Sun occurs as points where polar night occurs. Instead, the existence of a long twilight should be considered, whereby throughout the year the polar regions are more illuminated by the Sun than the equatorial regions. Inside the polar circles the sun is below the horizon, depending on the geographical location, from 20 hours to 186 days. And the phenomenon of refraction should also be mentioned. It is enough for the sun to be even partially above the horizon for there to be "daytime." It is actually a long aurora or long twilight. Daylight is enjoyed in a greater or lesser degree for ten months without interruption due to the effects of atmospheric refraction.

During the polar night the moon would pass across the sky showing all its phases in uninterrupted succession during a month. During the rest of the period the constellations would revolve in exactly horizontal orbits above the horizon. In such a regular star system kept in view so long and so continuously, the irregular movements of planets and stars could not escape possible observation. All their movements, accelerations, conjunctions, declinations, would have been perfectly noted and measured. Thanks to this natural observatory any people would have easily acquired astronomical notions. The fairy reflections of the northern light would have transformed the familiar daytime world into a veritable magical land. In the Arctic regions the Aurora Borealis (or rather Polar) has its own supernatural glory, it seems impossible to describe such green, blue and red splendors, truly worthy of a paradise.

It is therefore assumed that in ancient times there was a zone of habitable land, with a temperate climate, near the Arctic pole. It is interesting to find out that someone had done so some time before.

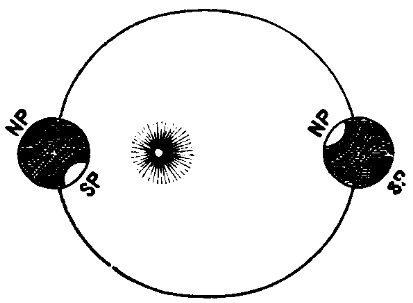
We will see, for example, Alfred Russel Wallace (*Island life, or the phenomena and causes of insular faunas and floras, including a revision and attempted solution of the problem of geological climates*, Macmillan & Co., London & New York, 1880), a brilliant naturalist, who developed his own theory of evolution at the same time as Darwin's. He, speaking of the Miocene, had hypothesized the northern and southern hemispheres to be very different from those of today, partly because of the phenomenon of the precession of the equinoxes, as can be seen from the figures below, taken from p.127 of the cited book.

N.HEMISPHERE WINTER IN APHELION



GLACIAL EPOCH IN
N.HEMISPHERE

S.HEMISPHERE WINTER IN APHELION



GLACIAL EPOCH IN
S.HEMISPHERE

In his theory Scandinavia would then have been a vast island. He says, "The distribution of formations in the Eocene and Miocene shows that during a considerable part of the Tertiary period an inland sea, more or less occupied by an archipelago of islands, extended over all of central Europe between the Baltic Sea and the Black and Caspian Seas, and from there several channels went out to the Euphrates Valley and the Persian Gulf, thus opening a communication between the North Atlantic and the Indian Ocean. A wide arm of sea also extended from the Caspian, during part of the Tertiary period, to the Arctic Ocean. Another channel probably existed over Egypt in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean and Black Seas; while there is likely to have been communication between the Baltic and White Seas, with Scandinavia transformed into a vast island. Turning to India, we find an arm of the sea, of great width and depth, extending from the Bay of Bengal to the mouth of the Indus; while the enormous depression indicated by the presence of Eocene marine fossils at an elevation of 16,500 feet in western Tibet makes it not improbable that a channel bound for Afghanistan opened a communication between the West Asian and the Polar Seas." Even without fully embracing Wallace's ideas, we must remember in more recent times at least the river connections between the polar areas and the inland seas (Mediterranean, Black and Caspian).

Warren (*Paradise Found*) also incidentally argued that studies of Arctic paleontology seemed to confirm the existence in the Eocene of a primitive continent located in higher latitudes, a continent that no longer exists. He argued that the rich and varied fauna that populated Europe at the dawn of the Tertiary period, as shown by abundant remains of mammalia (mammals as defined by Linnaeus) discovered in Eocene deposits, proved that a vast continent had existed in the Paleoarctic region.

Other scholars have also argued that various Arctic fossils and lithological findings point to the ancient existence of a polar continent in the Miocene. However, I must mention for intellectual honesty that contrary views are in the majority. The existence in ancient times of vast areas of northern Eurasia that are currently submerged seems more likely.

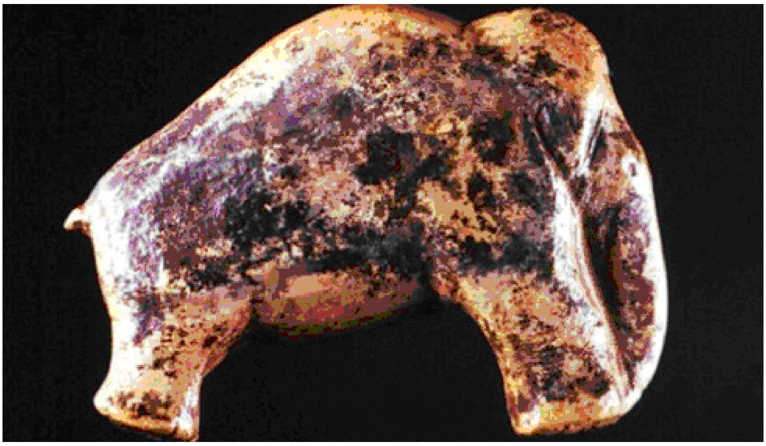
According to the geologist James Geikie (*The Great Ice Age and its relation to the Antiquity of Man,* 1874) a vast tract of Arctic land, of which Novaja Zemlja and Spitzbergen formed part, would have sunk anciently.

Climatologically speaking, it would seem that the Arctic zone enjoyed a milder temperature at one time than it does today. Until a geologically recent period the temperature at the poles would have been temperate, allowing rich and lush vegetation, as shown by organic and inorganic evidence.

According to the studies of Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker (*Introductory Essay to the Flora Tasmaniae*, 1859), a friend and follower of Darwin, and other scientists of the time, there were paleontological and other vestiges of vegetation in Tasmania from the far north, including on the basis of analysis of fossil flora. This was the basis for the theory of a primordial mother-region around the pole from which all floral plants would have proceeded. So regardless of where humans originated, it would be known where the plants that would have descended southward into Europe at the beginning of the Neozoic would have come from.

Botanist Otto Kuntze had conducted special studies of cultivated tropical plants scattered across continents separated by vast oceans. He had therefore asked himself specific questions. Considering the plantain banana, which was cultivated in America before the arrival of Europeans in 1492, Professor Kuntze wondered, "How did this plant, which is unable to endure a journey through the temperate zone, get to America?" The difficulty lies in the fact that the banana has no seeds and can only be propagated in a new country by bringing in a living root and planting it in suitable soil. This would be proof that the plant has been tended by man during a large period of time, because a cultivated plant that has no seeds must have been under cultivation for a long time. As for transportation from the old world to the new world, or vice versa, it should be remembered that the plantain is a tree-like, herbaceous plant that does not possess easily transportable bulbs, such as the potato or dahlia, nor is it propagable with thalli, such as the willow or poplar. It has only a perennial root, which, once planted, needs very little care. Thus he had come to the conclusion that civilized man must have brought its roots to any new region he visited; not only that, he also believed that its presence in America could be explained by supposing that it had been brought there from the north-polar countries when a much more temperate climate prevailed there.

Man has certainly been a great traveler from his earliest beginnings. It is not easy to follow the itinerary of his travels on earth, which have been lost anyway, and what remains is not easily deciphered. According to the trilaureate anthropologist (science, medicine and natural history) Jean Louis Armand de Quatrefages de Bréau (*L'Espèce humaine*, 1877), the cradle of the human race was to be located in the great region bounded to the south and southwest by the Himalayas, to the west by the Bolor Mountains (=quartz crystal in Mongolian), to the northwest by the Alatau Mountains, to the north by the Altai Range (=Gold Mountain), to the east by Mount King Khan, and to the south and southeast by Felina and Kwen-lun. However, he later stated that later paleontological studies had led him to modify these initial conclusions, considering that the earliest human centers may have been considerably further north than the mentioned region, perhaps even in polar Asia. Without taking a position, he added that probably prehistoric archaeology or paleontology might one day confirm or disprove this hypothesis. Later, Professor Friedrich Müller, a linguist from Vienna, and Dr. Moritz Wagner, a geographer, considered the possibility of the cradle of the human race in the extreme northern reaches of Eurasia. That said, we can see that the theory of a place of origin of mankind in the far north is acceptable, in a variety of respects, including scientific ones. We know that many clues also appeared in ancient mythical cosmology and geography, in ancient Greek, Egyptian, Assyro-Babylonian and Akkadian thought, as well as in Persian, Hindu, Chinese and Japanese thought. The same idea of a mild primordial climate is found in all ancient peoples. Ovid describes a perennial spring under the reign of Saturn, and the present spring would be only a pale reminder of the original one. Thus Lactantius (*Placidus*, 4) had preserved a shred of the old folk belief when he said that only after the loss of heaven did darkness and winter appear on earth. The decline of man would have come with this worsening of the climate. Thus the ancient writers, with very rare exceptions, describe the men of their time as inferior in stature, strength and longevity to the progenitors of the race. Hesiod, Aratus, Ovid, Virgil, and Claudian differ somewhat in their descriptions of the successive epochs of human history, but they all agree in depicting the men of their time as weak, puny, and shorter-lived in comparison with primitive men. Juvenal, the scourger of corrupt customs, in a well-known passage (*Saturæ*, XV), alluded to Homer's judgment and expresses his own: "*Nam genere hoc vivo jam decrescebat Homero, Terra malos homines nunc educat atque pusillos."(*= Since Homer lived our species began to degenerate; now the earth educates only evil and inept men). Plato, speaking of the Atlanteans, said, "Not only did they obey the laws, but they also remained in spiritual harmony with divinity..." and so "the designs of their minds, which they held within themselves, were in conformity with the truth, and in every respect great, until the day when the divine nature had power in them. But when the divine essence, often mingled with the mortal nature, was extinguished in them, and the mortal nature prevailed, then they degenerated, and to those who knew how to see they appeared vile for having lost the most beautiful of the most precious virtues; but those, who could not see true life with respect to happiness, then judged them beautiful and blessed, while they were full of unjust arrogance and arrogance." This would seem to be a version of the story of original sin or the fall of the angels from the book of Enoch.



As far back as the Miocene, life was extremely abundant, as evidenced by fossil finds of plants and animals. Just to give an example, lycopods, which today are humble plants barely reaching a meter in height, were at that time eighty- or ninety-foot trees. Even in the Spitzbergen no less than ninety-five species of fossil plants have been found. The vigor of plant life in the Miocene in these Arctic regions appears truly remarkable. The book of Genesis describes one of the trees of Eden three hundred and twenty feet tall, which was incredible until the discovery in California. But *Sequoia gigantea* is an indisputable fact, alive and well for all to see. Although it is not the oldest in the *Coniferæ*, it illustrates some of the possibilities of plant life. And at that time many animals of enormous size appeared, whose present descendants are considerably smaller. Mammoth finds have been abundant in Siberia, as far back as 1707, with a great deal of ivory. Up to 30,000 kilograms of it were resold annually.

There does not seem to be anything so extraordinarily new in the theory that the disappearance of the primordial seat of humankind and the arrival of the great ice age are connected with the Flood; the Swedish explorer Nils Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld recounts, in his 1881 book *The Voyage of the Vega Round Asia and Europe*, that nearly 200 years earlier the Russian ambassador Evert Yssbrants Ides had made a three-year journey via China to the far north, where he found this very ancient tradition.

We had said that in order to support the thesis of a primeval paradise in the Arctic polar area, a place with a temperate climate would have to be found. It now seems that this has been satisfactorily verified, although introducing some novelties, given the peculiarity of the place suggested as the cradle of mankind. The hypothesis might have seemed absurd and ridiculous, very true. However, it can now be said with confidence that the hypothesis of a polar paradise can meet even the most difficult requirements. In any case, I recognize that this location of the primordial site may at first seem absolutely absurd.

If over centuries of endless discussion no place had ever been found that could meet the simple conditions of Genesis, by logic it might have seemed unlikely to find one now. The hypothesis, to be tested, had to find a completely new interpretation, comparing the oldest cosmological ideas and the scattered traditions of mankind. Such an interpretation was considered forbidden by the unanimous and almost plebiscite of modern scholars of all historical and archaeological disciplines. It was therefore considered utterly improbable, if not impossible, that such research could be crowned with success!

Fortunately, human affairs do not always follow the myopic path of men, even if they are of science.

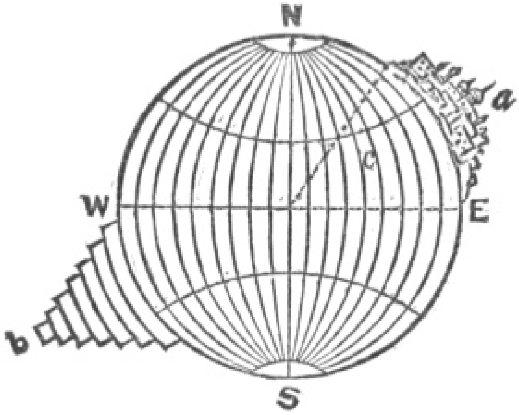
In proceeding with this research, many curious things have come to light, at least one of which deserves to be mentioned here. Archaeologists are well aware (or at least they should be) that as far back as 1777 the erudite and brilliant Jean Sylvain Bailly, in his "Lettres *sur l'Atlantide de Platon*," and "*Lettres sur l'origine des Sciences,"* argued that the cradle of primitive civilization was located in Siberia, within the 49th or 50th degree of latitude. In the latter book is a noteworthy passage in which the author, rhetorically locating the cradle of mankind in Hyperborea near the pole, observed the "singular "conformity of that starting point with both all the phenomena of civilization and the indications of mythology. At the same time, however, almost afraid of his own audacity, he reassured his readers by announcing that his suggestion was "only a philosophical fiction," which lacked the support of history. Is it too much to say that wider support has now been found? It seems that abundant confirmation has been found and it is now easier to recognize the illusory preconceptions that in the past had suggested false theories or the belief that the problem was insoluble. Thus, after what we have learned about the religious traditions of all ancient peoples, it is much easier to believe that the primitive cradle of man might have been located in the north.

In the post-glacial age the ancient dwelling had naturally been associated with the East, and all investigators, whether Jews, Christians or Muslims, had tried in vain to find some eastern region with a paradisiacal climate, a central tree and the four rivers with which to identify the primitive Eden. From this basic preconception came a continuous failure, perpetuated for centuries.

Once again, even reviewing the findings of the theologians, it was seen that not a few, like Luther, had rejected certain seemingly nonsensical and contradictory representations of the Church fathers, some of whom had placed Eden in heaven, others on earth or even on the moon. Clarification has now come to all this confusion. The mountain of Paradise is at the same time in heaven and on earth. And it is interesting to note that the late medieval theologians, despite their little openness to historical research, traced this conception. Indeed, Albertus Magnus claimed, "I have found in some ancient texts that the apostle Thomas was of the opinion that...heaven was so high as to touch the lunar circle" (*Summa Theologiæ*, *Pars* II., *Tract*. XIII, qu. 79).

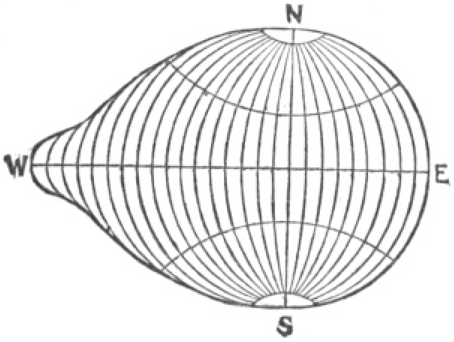
Moreover, two heavens, one heavenly and one earthly, connected by a pillar or bridge, over which holy souls could pass, have been described in various Asian religions. Therefore, when one ancient writer is found to allude to a location of heaven on earth and another places it in heaven, the confusion is not in the mind of the writer, but only in that of the reader.

In this regard a good word must also be put here for poor Constantine of Antioch, better known as Cosmas Indicopleuste, the man who had the honor of being the ancient cosmographer most ignored and despised by modern scholars. No doubt it is easy to ridicule his rustic depiction of the universe (*Topographia Christiana*), but who can assure us that thirteen or fourteen centuries from now current speculations about the shape and structure of the universe could not be just as easily ridiculed? Nonetheless, what has been said so far has given new meaning to the thought of this merchant "who sailed to India," who indicates to us that his "mountain" to the north of the countries known on his voyage was none other than Mount Meru, the legendary peak that supported the northern hemisphere. Cosmas locates to the north, not to the west, as sometimes misrepresented, "the land where men dwelt before the Flood." If our conclusions are correct, Cosmas was the first known geographer to give the world a true representation of the original location of the antediluvian world. Thus perhaps the judgment of him should be revised, turning criticism into praise. The same principles of Cosmas's strange world also explain the strange conception of the earth found in the letters of Christopher Columbus, according to which the western hemisphere turns out to be true to the spherical figure, but the hemisphere of the far west shows a noticeable prominence at the equator, where Asia should have been, but which later turned out to be the northern part of South America. This gave the earth the figure below, which looks almost like a rounded pear. At first this representation seems arbitrary and wacky to us, but if we go back a century and look at the earth according to Dante, we will find an even more eccentric earth, on which the mount of Paradise has slipped 30° below the equator, as highlighted in the figure below.



The Earth of Dante.

a. City of Jerusalem. *b*. Mountain of Purgatory. *c*. Inferno within the Earth.



The Earth of Columbus.

In his description of the mountain in Purgatory, Dante says (Purgatorio, Canto IV, 67-70.):

How that is, if you want to be able to think,
Within gathered imagines Zion
With this mount on the earth to stand
So that both have but one horizon
And different hemìsperes....

When the Divine Comedy was written, Jerusalem was believed to stand exactly in the center of the habitable hemisphere; while the opposite hemisphere would be covered by waters, in the midst of which would rise the mountain of Purgatory, in exactly the opposite position from Mount Zion, antipodes of each other. And Dante's Purgatory is described as a mountainous island whose summit reaches the first of the celestial spheres, that of the moon. On the top of the mountain is situated the earthly paradise, which had been the Garden of Eden. No attentive reader of the Divine Comedy can fail to see that "Mount Zion" and the Mount of Purgatory are simply unrecognized "survivals" of a prehistoric concept, which are adapted here to meet the needs of medieval sacred cosmology. These mountains are the Su-Meru and Ku-Meru of India transferred into Christian poetry.

In the illustration of this curious cosmos a Hindu would almost certainly find the depiction of a Puranic world map. Thus the origin of the most eccentric and apparently illogical conceptions of medieval cosmographers can be explained. It should not be forgotten that Dante's teacher in the natural sciences had been Brunetto Latini, who was born in 1230 and died in 1294 and is fondly remembered in Inferno, XV. 85. He had written a book, *Li Livres dou Tresor*, in lingua d'oil, in which (lib. I, part III) the author ably supports the doctrine of the spherical earth.

Considering these conclusions to be correct, we therefore necessarily come to a reinterpretation of history, in relation also to physical, paleontological, archaeological, philological, mythological and ethnological factors-in a word, to every area that current thinking is capable of embracing.

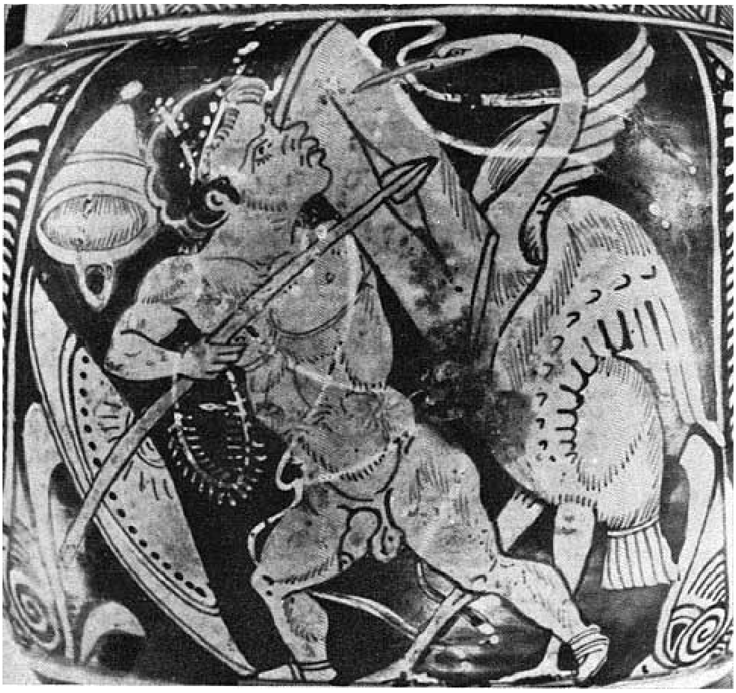
Most of today's scholars feel little more than pity and contempt for all that the ancients had done in their time, but such a mindset must be absolutely deplored. Its effects are detrimental in every respect, causing a disconnection from the historical and collective intellectual life of humanity, thus losing interest in the study of ancient culture.

On the other hand, men who ignore the history of the human mind and are concerned only with the most recent achievements place themselves outside such a spiritual connection in which all forms and fragments of knowledge find unity and mutual integration.

Without knowledge of the past, science is nothing. It is necessary to apply the best possible correctives to this one-sided attitude, trying to offer stimuli to the researcher's curiosity.

There are various myths, the significance of which for the progress of biology could be really interesting today. Note, for example, this curious fact: that while in the ancient Aryan thought of the East the gods on Mount Meru are of prodigious stature, the inhabitants of the adjacent regions are somewhat less large, though still gigantic; and the stature seems to diminish gradually from *varsha* to *varsha*, until it reaches Bhârata, situated on the borders on the equatorial ocean and populated by ordinary men.

And because the inhabitants of Hades, being even further south, should by some law of nature be even smaller in comparison with humans, the soul of



Prince Satyavân, when he was taken away from Yama's abode, is described in the Mahâbhârata as being only one inch in height. This seems to me to be a rather indicative sequence.

Beginning with beings sometimes represented as towering giants, we end up at the edge of the land of death with disembodied spirits whose paltry stature is only an inch. But this conception was not limited to the ancestors of the Hindus. In the earliest Greek thought the proper *habitat* of the pygmies was near the equatorial river-ocean; farther on, advancing northward, was the abode of men, and proceeding still farther, one came to the region of giants; while on polar Olympus the gods were so colossal that Ares, in his fall (Iliad, XXI), had covered seven jugeri, while Poseidon with four steps (Iliad, XIII) goes from Samos to Aege.

Hints of prodigious stature are also found in other mythologies, and perhaps this has some significance for today's biology. Perhaps that in the northern lands, living conditions might have had some consequence for the bodies? Perhaps the duration of exposure to sunlight would have resulted in greater growth? As Matthew Fontain Maury said : "as science has progressed, men have looked with deeper and deeper interest toward the mystic circles of the polar regions. There are the icebergs, true navigating glaciers; there the tides have their cradle, the whales their nursery; there the winds complete the circuits and currents of the sea; there is the light of the aurora, and the flickering needle of the compass finds rest; there, in the labyrinths of that magic circle, terrestrial forces of unknown power and of wide influence on the well-being of man are continually at play. Within the Arctic Circle lies the pole of winds and cold, the pole of earth and magnet. It is a place of mysteries; and the desire to explore its desolations and secrets, to study its physical phenomena has grown more and more. Boldness has made Arctic ice and snowy land a classic destination. It is neither feverish excitement nor vain ambition that leads men there. It is a higher feeling, a higher motive: the desire to look at the works of creation, to understand the economy of creation and improve in wisdom and knowledge."

When such a passion for discovery is developed even toward abstract problems, extensive results can be achieved and at least some of the mysteries of nature, such as the place of origin of human life, can be solved!

I return to my sparse and exhausted readers hoping to have succeeded in summarizing some interpretations on the mountain of heaven from various authors, particularly from Warren's encyclopedic work, now half-forgotten. Certainly they are affected by the cultures of the time of the writers, if we are then to refer to Warren, I recognize that his was an often fideistic attitude, showing, however, that he was not a slave to the common feeling and prejudices typical of the academic mentality, even though he was an integral part of the cathedratic world.

Some of the opinions are highly questionable, yet one detects an uncommon freedom of thought and an ability to scrape to the bottom of the barrel of his broad culture.

I agree that Warren trusts a little too much in the indefinite progress of science, a belief typical of the 19th century and perpetuated - unfortunately - to the present day, and that he relies heavily - out of professional bias - on biblical texts, however, we cannot fault him too hastily.

Many of his ideas are really profound and definitely acceptable.

It will be seen later how his thought can really be reconciled in many points with current studies and research.

THE WORLD TREE

I know that a tall ash tree stands, called Yggdrasill,
Tree sprinkled with white clay.
From there the dew falls down into the valley
It always stands verdant over the Fountain of Destiny.

- The Elder Edda

Let us now look at the other subject always present in all ancient representations of the world: the Sacred Tree. This is only a hint, as the tree theme appears in various places in this book, being associated with different mythological traditions.

However, when talking about the 'World Tree, it is impossible not to identify it with the sacred ash tree of the *Edda* world. Among the Greeks, it is likely that the holy palm of Delos, on which Leto gave birth to Apollo, represented the same mythical world tree. If so, and if we follow Hecataeus of Miletus in finding the place, we will arrive at the Arctic pole. The eternally flourishing olive tree of Athena (Euripides' *Ion*) would also seem to be another form of sacred palm; in some of his descriptions the poet again takes us to the land of the Hyperboreans.

In the garden of the Hesperides, the tree that gave golden apples was undoubtedly the tree of paradise; following Aeschylus, Ferecides and Apollodorus, we must necessarily place it in the far north, beyond the Rifei Mountains.

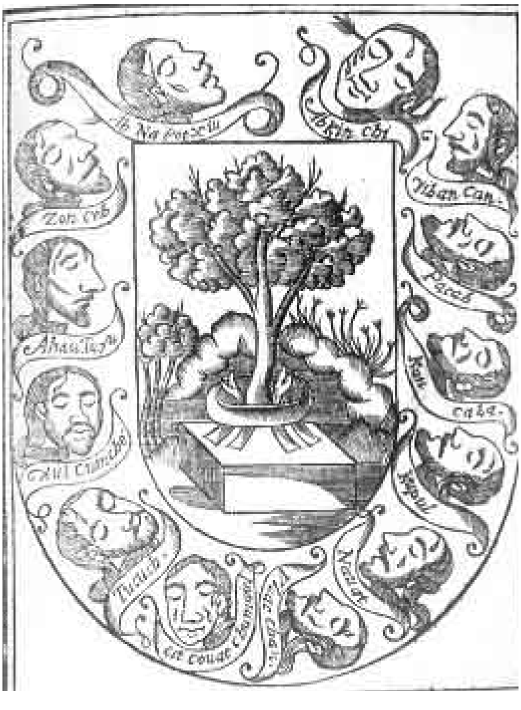
It is also not without deep significance that in the medieval legend that Seth, visiting the Garden of Eden to obtain for his dying father Adam the oil of compassion, saw the tree of life here, with its top in heaven and its roots in hell.

In the crucifixion of Christ, it becomes "Arbor, quæ ab initio posita est," and this cosmic tree dies and becomes the "Arbre Sec" of medieval history (Marco Polo, *Million*).

Ancient Chinese legends also speak of a miraculous tree on which some men were allegedly saved from the flood. A similar tradition was also found among the Navajo, thanks to a tree located in the center of the world.

I feel compelled to mention an image of the Maya universe, which Cogolludo, a Spanish priest, had copied in 1640 from *Mani's Chilam Balam*, a sacred book of the Maya. and included in his *Historia de Yucathan*, written after twenty-one years spent among those peoples. The cube, in Mayan cosmogony, represents the earth, on which, resting on the sides of the earth on four feet, stands the vase containing the celestial waters (snow, hail, rain) on which life depends. In the vase grows the tree of life (Yax), surrounded by clouds.

The thirteen heads surrounding the world tree would represent thirteen cycles of years or even the thirteen possible directions of space.



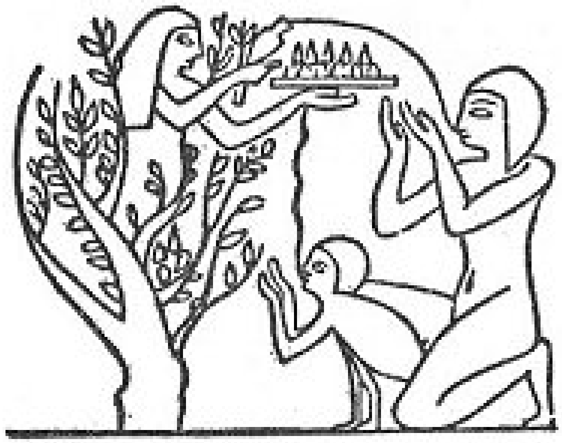
In Celtic tradition, the tree of paradise is that of the golden apples of Avalon. But Avalon is always represented as an island in the far north, and its

Castle of Magnetite evidently connects it to the region of the magnetic pole. Avalon,as expressed by its name, is the 'island of apples (in Breton apple is said aval, akin to Welsh afal and German apfel). Always apples, such as the golden apples of the Garden of the Hesperides, guarded by the dragon Ladon, or those of Tír na nòg (the mythical land of eternal youth, inhabited by the Elves, in which there was neither disease nor death.

In the ancient epic poem of the Finns, the Kalevala, we again find the world tree. Should any doubt arise as to its geographical location, the towering constellation Ursa Major should easily dispel it.

Here is an image of the sacred tree of the Egyptians, with the sky, or rather the sky goddess Nut, conferring knowledge on man and his soul.

The tree at the center of the world is the same tree that in ancient Egyptian mythology enclosed the sarcophagus of Osiris, which the king of Byblos used as a pillar to support the roof of his palace. But this was just another image of the axis of the world. It is clear from the quotations in the texts that under all its Egyptian names the tree of life is a true world tree, whose trunk coincides with the axis of the world; a tree on whose branches sits Bennu, the sun-bird that is reborn from the waters, the Arabian Phoenix; a tree from whose polar top the north wind blows; a tree from which, like Yggdrasil, a life-giving celestial rain descends like the Iranian Ardvi-Sûra and which descends not only on the fields of Egypt, but, like the Ardvi Sûra, also on the underworld, refreshing those who are in the Amenti. The upper part of the Egyptian tree of life is thus located near the Arctic pole, just like Yggdrasil.



But we also find the tree of life among the Dayaks of Borneo, on the island of Bali (Pohon beringin i.e., tree of good fortune), in China (where it forms with the snake at the base and a bird on the branches a triad, 1200 B.C.). Ever-recurring symbolism.

Phoenicians, Syrians and Assyrians each had their own sacred tree symbolizing the universe. In the lost work *Heptamychia* by Ferecides of Syrus he is represented as a "winged oak" (but δρῦς was originally a generic term for tree). On him was cast the magnificent and sumptuous peplos of Harmony, on which were represented the Ocean with its rivers, the earth with its omphalos in the center, and the sphere of heaven. But in this interpretation the symbol has been with wings to facilitate its constant rotation, so it is clear that we have not only the world tree, but also the axis of heaven and earth.

It is an established fact that sacred trees, like the sacred waters of all ancient peoples, invariably take us to lands outside the 'historical *habitat* of the peoples in question and always to the same primordial country, the far north.

IN THE DEPTHS OF THE NORTHERN SEA

Even if you walk the whole earth,
you will never learn so many things
How many you will learn from the sea.

- *Pär Lagerkvist*

I had already mentioned Jurgen Spanuth, a Lutheran pastor as well as a theologian and classical philologist in an earlier paper of mine, so I will briefly summarize what has already been said. He was born in Austria, in Leoben, had studied theology at the Universities of Tübingen, Berlin and Vienna. While living in Schleswig he became interested in local traditions, which agreed that a temple dedicated to sun worship had existed on an island in Jutland, dating back to the late Bronze Age. Spanuth, a theologian and classical philologist, was interested in it and thus moved to write about it. Among his many works are *Das enträtselte Atlantis; ...und doch: Atlantis enträtselt! Eine Entgegnung; Atlantis. Heimat, Reich und Schicksal der Germanen; Die Phönizier. Ein Nordmeervolk im Libanon.; Die Philister. Das unbekannte Volk. Lehrmeister und Widersacher der Israeliten.*

Basically, he had elaborated on the idea that the Platonic Atlantis, mentioned by Plato in the dialogues Timaeus and Cirtia, was located in the North Sea, and that its political and religious center was located in the Bronze Age near the present-day island of Heligoland. This center, located on an island now submerged by the waters, would be identified with Basileia, the royal island of the Phaeacians sung about by Homer in the Odyssey. And the Phaeacians, whose seafaring skills were extolled by Homer, would be none other than the Hyperboreans of the myths and tales of the ancient Greeks. Thus Spanuth identified the Northern Bronze Age with the Atlantean empire. According to Spanuth, several could have been the causes of the sinking of Atlantis, perhaps a comet that came too close to the earth or a large meteorite, which would thus have caused unimaginable tidal waves. Not for nothing did the Greeks have the myth of Phaeton, who allegedly crashed with the chariot of the sun lent to him by Apollo, the Egyptians that of Sekhmet, in Syria Anat was remembered, while in the *Avesta* Tishtrya was mentioned. The catastrophe would occur, according to the scholar, around 1250 B.C., and would be identified with the flood of Deucalion of Greek mythology and the seven plagues of Egypt of biblical memory.

This author also considers another problem that is difficult to decipher, that of the identification of orichalc. This term, which for the Greeks meant "similar to gold," has always created great problems of interpretation, partly because it was always thought to be bronze or some other alloy; instead, Spanuth thought it might be the much-appreciated and sought-after amber, which passed through Europe, precisely through what have been called amber routes, reaching the Mediterranean, where it was sold in Egypt and the East. The amber with its much-appreciated fiery reflections and which could be dissolved in linseed oil to make slabs, which could then be used to cover furniture and walls.

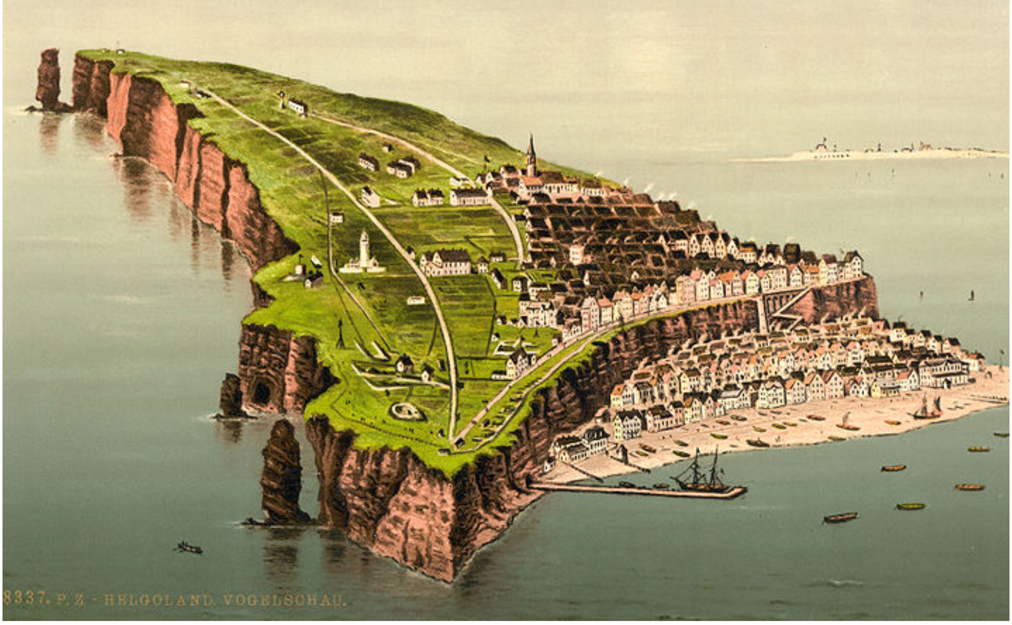
Among other things, the Japan Cultural Heritage Agency announced that two amber beads were found at a tomb in Asukamura, Nara Prefecture, along with two human bone fragments and a piece of iron. The two elongated beads measure 9.5 millimeters and 9.3 millimeters in length, and each bears a hole 1.8 millimeters in diameter. Amber seems to have come a long way, perhaps passing from hand to hand through the merchants of the time, or perhaps through ancient misunderstood migrations of peoples from the Baltic area. At this point how can we fail to mention the massive presence of blue-eyed individuals in modern Iran, Afghanistan, Kurdistan, India and Pakistan, as well as Central Asia (Tajikistan, Kyrghisia, Turkmenistan, Mongolia and northern China)? And not to mention the recent discovery of blond mummies, over 4,000 years old, in the Tarim Basin in China? Looking is believing.

Here I am also compelled to mention a people from the Tarim Basin, the Uighurs.

Modern scholars believe that present-day Uighurs are the descendants of several peoples, including the ancient Uighurs of Mongolia, who arrived in the Tarim Basin after the fall of the Uighur Khaganate Khanate, some Iranian tribes, and other Indo-European peoples who had inhabited the Tarim Basin before the arrival of the Mongols. DNA analyses indicate that Central Asian peoples such as the Uighurs are all the result of the interbreeding of Europoid and Asian peoples. They are identified with the descendants of the Tarim mummies, but genetic research on these ancient mummies and their relationship to modern Uighurs is controversial, as Chinese government officials fear that such research could encourage eventual ethnic separatism.

But back to Spanuth.

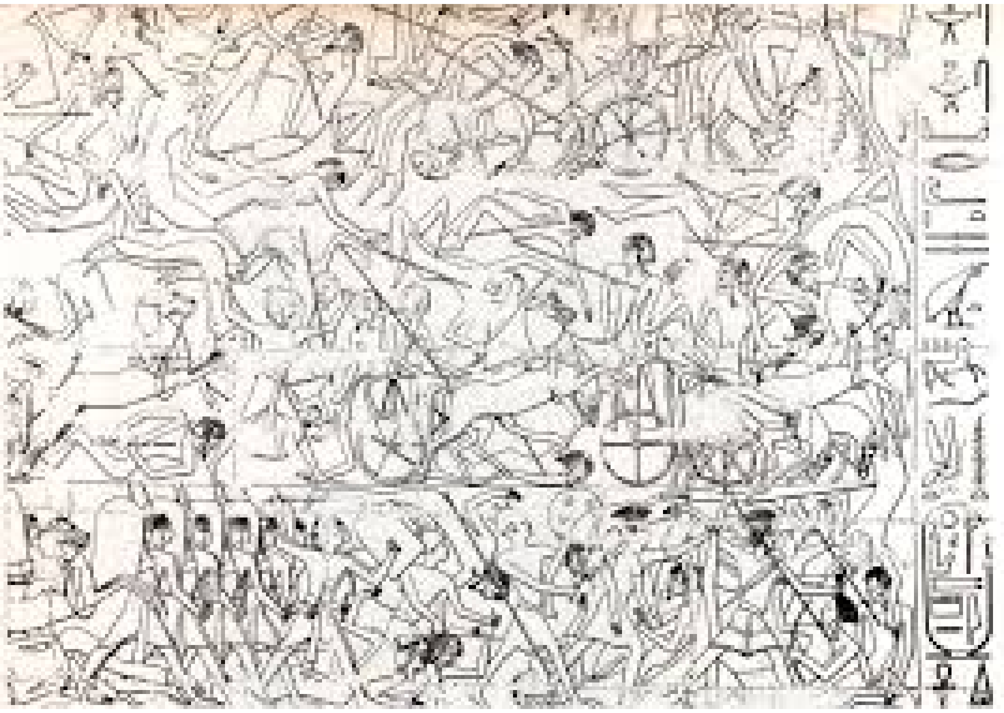
However, this researcher did not limit himself to elaborating hypotheses, but actively engaged in field research, traveling to Egypt to personally view the paintings and inscriptions at Medinet Abu (where the war of the Egyptians against the Sea Peoples is illustrated), and then organizing an underwater archaeological expedition near Helgoland, finding traces of ancient submerged constructions. During a 'submarine exploration a short distance from Helgoland, he traced the remains of large walls to the very spot where he had believed Basileia, the capital of the Hyperboreans, was located.


8337. P. Z. - HELGOLAND VOGELSCHAU.

He had found traces of Cyclopean constructions in the seafloor, but could not continue the expedition due to lack of funds, having exhausted those provided to him by sponsors. According to his analysis, the ancient Atlantean culture was a northern European and proto-Germanic culture. Jurgen Spanuth had collected some very interesting data in his research in Egypt. The invasion wars of the so-called Sea Peoples had been recounted in his time, at least in brief hints, by the priests of Sais to Solon, one of the seven sages of Greece, telling him that long before they had invaded the entire

Mediterranean (coming from the Haou-Nebout, mythical root country of the human race, located beyond the S'n Wur, the Great Green, as the Egyptians called the Ocean River), had invaded all of Greece except Athens, the only one that had resisted, had gone as far as Egypt, to the mouth of the Nile, where the decisive battle had been fought, in which their fleet had been defeated by that of Pharaoh Rameses III. This was a coalition of peoples, as mentioned above.

Their kingdom would have been destroyed by a terrible natural disaster. These peoples are likely to be identified with the Philistines (etymologically: the men of the columns), the peoples then inhabiting present-day Libya, the Daunians, the Siculians, the Sardinians and peoples from other Mediterranean islands. But when speaking of columns, one cannot forget the legend of Samson or the columns on which the vault of heaven rested according to the Celts or those at which the kings of Atlantis offered their sacrifices.In any case, from the reliefs on the walls of the Medinet Abu temple, we can see that the Hyperborean captives appear to be of a physically and culturally different type from the Egyptians: their ships are adapted to navigation on the open sea, their weapons are mainly long swords of the northern European type, and their hairstyles involve a long braid on the temple temple. The Atlantes, known then as the Sea Peoples, would have begun the invasion of Egypt as a confederation of peoples, including the Denen (Danes), the Sakar (Saxons), the Phrst (Frisians) who would later give their name to Palestine, the Sekalesa (from whom Sicily would take its name), the Sardasa (Sardinians) and others. The Hyperborean god would be the solar Apollo, whose cult would thus pass to Greece. The invasion was repelled by the Egyptians, as recounted profusely on the columns of the temple at Medinet Abu. Later, as the Phrst (Philistines) settled in Palestine, the Sakar would do so in Lebanon, giving rise to the Phoenician seafaring tradition. These peoples would bring their own writing, giving rise first to the Phoenician alphabet, then to the Greek alphabet, and would subdue the local peoples, of Semitic origin, later aiding Solomon in the construction of the temple.

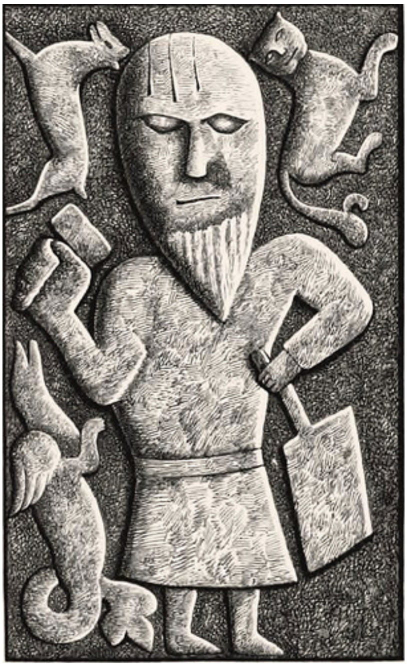


However, the difference in dating from Plato's date, which had determined the sinking of Atlantis around 9000 B.C., persisted. Spanuth believed that the difference was motivated by the use in ancient times of a lunar calendar. Therefore it came to 673 solar years before Solon, or 1230 B.C.

Spanuth relied on tales from the Odyssey, which evidently drew on old pilot books, probably annotated on *ostrakas*, and tales reported by sailors in its geographical descriptions of Odysseus' voyages.

He compared several points of the Homeric account with what the Egyptian priests reported to the Greek historian, and found a great many points of contact.

In particular, he identified the Phaeacians with the Hyperboreans, going so far as to speculate that their island, from the description made of it by the Greek vate, was located in the North Sea, in the vicinity of the 'present-day island of Helgoland, whose very name in Old German (Terra Sacra) refers to sacred values of remote antiquity. It should be remembered that Helgoland had been the seat of the cult of Photios, as recorded by Adam of Bremen in his work *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*



Fosite was a Frisian law-giving god who carried an axe. The temple dedicated to him was called Axenshowe. He is likened to Forseti, deity of the Norse Edda. Alcuin of York in the 8th century e.v. refers to an island called Fositesland, located between Friesland and Denmark, named in his honor. There are no adventures attributed to him in the Edda, which would give the impression of a minor god. However, an alternative explanation is that he represents the image of a very ancient god. It should not be forgotten that Tyr does not appear much in the Edda, despite being much older than Wotan. It is speculated that Phosite was eclipsed by another god, perhaps Thor. His symbol, the axe, is akin to Thor's hammer.

Currently Jürgen Spanuth's theories are not even discussed by academia, closed in on itself as usual. Perhaps not all of his theses are acceptable, however, he was certainly a brilliant amateur who contributed undoubtedly interesting data. As usual, his fault was precisely that he was an amateur, thus defined as a pseudo-historian by the usual toga academics. But his work in the field was thorough and serious.

WESTERN CIVILIZATION

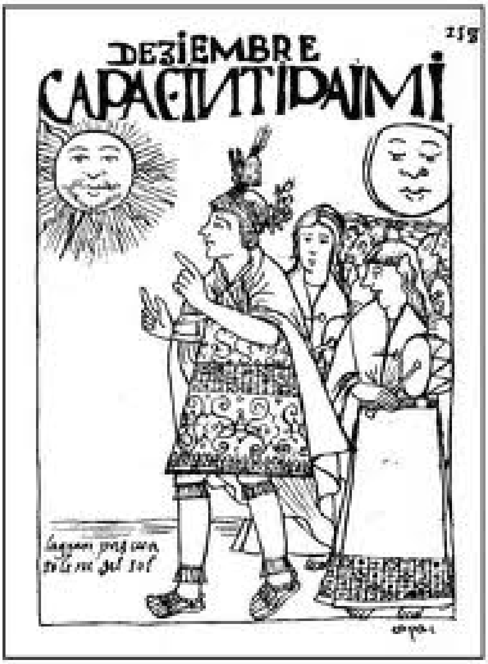
Forests precede civilization,

deserts follow it.

- François-René de Chateaubriand

Thanks to the trusty crow, I remembered one of the many old books that I jealously keep (they are my best friends, once paid for they never betray you again) and whose author drew precisely on the Bible, just mentioned above, to support some of his theses on European civilization. The book is *Origenes de la civilizacion occidental* by Aldo Ottolenghi. A booklet dating back to 1970, which I had found by chance (is there such a thing as chance?) while loitering in a Buenos Aires bookstore. I saw it, started leafing through it, and it looked interesting, so I went through the checkout and the next day I had read it all.

Now, remembering some interesting points in the book, I have picked it up again and found some stimulating insights for us. I say for us, because I assume that the topics covered can make us all meditate. Ottolenghi wants to find the origins of European civilization through the Bible, pagan legends, proven facts and graphic expressions of thought. The Bible, according to the author, who has the advantage of knowing Hebrew and can therefore delve into many interpretive themes, presents yes a mythical narrative, but citing real events and facts. What later came to be called the earthly paradise was the translation to the Greek (paradeison) of "dan," meaning "place protected by a fence or wall" (this reminds me of the "vara" of the Avesta); from there, after the well-known events of Adam and Eve, Cain moved eastward, after the tragic altercation with Abel (representing the contrasts between an agricultural and sedentary civilization, and a pastoral and nomadic one). Later we have the events of Noah, whose ark (built with wood of "gofer"(גפר), a term used only once in the Bible and lacking a reasonable translation) lands, after the well-known travails, Noah and family, whose descendants (representing peoples and cities) settle in various areas. From Shem derive the cities of Arpachsad, Peleg, Serug and Nahor in Mesopotamia. Japheth's descendants were Cimmerians, Medes, Ionians and island dwellers of Cyprus (Kittim) and Rhodes (Dodanim). But also Tarschish (Tartessus), Tubal and Meschech. Now, according to some scholars (José Camon Aznar, a Spanish historian and chair, and Adolf Schulten, a German archaeologist and philologist), traces of the Etruscans, including language, would be found in Tartessus before the invasion of the Celts (ca. 800 B.C.). Cam's descendants were Cush (Upper Egypt to Ethiopia), Mizraim (Egypt), Put (Libya) and Canaan. All peoples we know where they were located, that is, west of the "dan" and from where (east of the "dan") Cain had settled. Therefore a shift motivated presumably by the westward motion of the ark. Ottolenghi believes that the Noah myth encapsulates a history of migration from east to west, tracing white peoples to Manchuria and the Sakhalin Islands, the aforementioned Ainu. Peoples who would also penetrate into the Pacific, mixing with Negroids and Australoids. White peoples also penetrated India, where around 3000 B.C. there was already a developed civilization, that of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, which the invaders subdued. White peoples also arrived in America, either by crossing the Pacific or through the Behring Strait. The author picks up on the myth of Atlantis, recalling that in pre-Inca constructions (Sachsahuaman, the foundations of Cuzco, etc.) no concrete was used to join the huge stone blocks juxtaposed perfectly together without even a crack. Some Greek myths are used to support his theories of relationships between pre-Columbian American and European civilizations. Initially he was struck by the resemblance between an image of the Sun appearing in a drawing by Guaman Poma de Ayala (*Nueva Corónica y Buen Gobierno*), the Sun in the Aztec Calendar or Piedra del Sol, and in some images of Medusa both Etruscan and Sicilian. One can well see that the similarity is truly amazing, both in expression and in details, such as the dangling tongue (which according to tradition is supposed to protect against bad luck). The same can also be said of other ancient representations of Medusa, such as those from Campania.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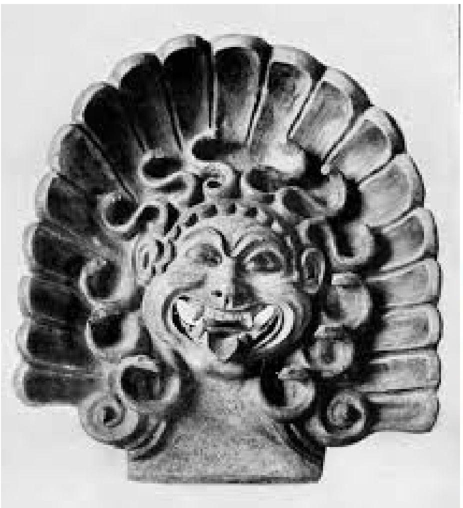
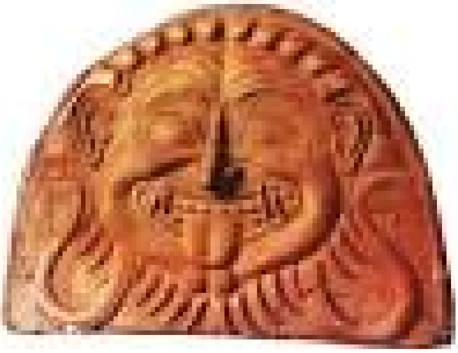
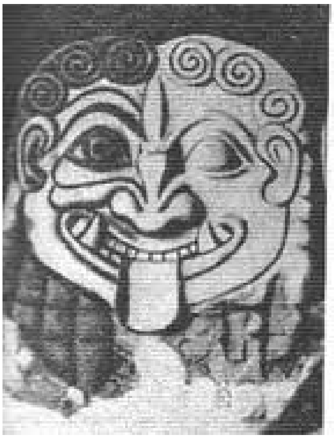
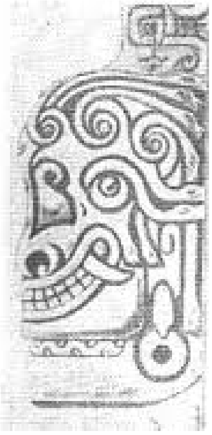
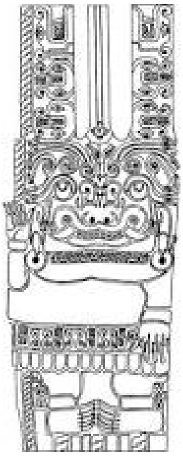




Then there is a Gorgon from a temple in Syracuse, which appears almost identical to an image from Chavin de Huantar, a religious and ceremonial center located in Peru, north of Lima. Incredible. A startling resemblance.

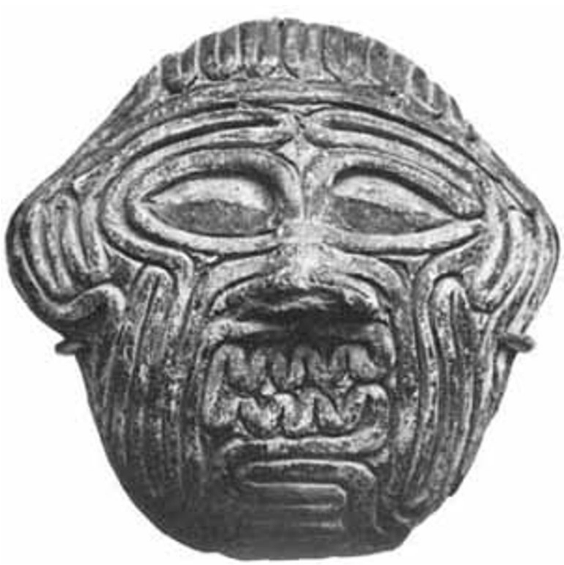






I do not know how to explain the unlikely similarity, especially taking into account that the Peruvian image dates from between 900 and 200 B.C.

But what do we know about the Gorgons? According to historical critics anciently there was only one Gorgon, which later turned into a trinity. The Gorgon lived beyond the Pillars of Hercules and her gaze was fatal. Perseus cut off her head while looking at her reflection in a shield as shiny as a mirror. But Medusa's decapitated head, put in a leather sack, finds a parallel in the myth of Gilgamesh and the monstrous Humbaba, god of intestines; Humbaba's head is also put in a leather sack and given to a deity (in this case Enlil). The oldest representations of Medusa render her strangely bearded (as Humbaba).



Humbaba's face makes me think of a reading of the entrails of the sacrificed animal, which must have appeared as a labyrinth to the officiant (still the labyrinth), as the Etruscan haruspices well knew (while augurs were experts in ornithomancy, the divinatory science that drew auspices from the flight of birds).

However, the first to assert that Medusa turned men into stones were Pindar and Aeschylus, while Homer had merely told us that her gaze was terrible. Hesiod, in the Theogony, says that she was the mistress of Poseidon. Who was, as we know, the supreme god of Plato's Atlanteans.

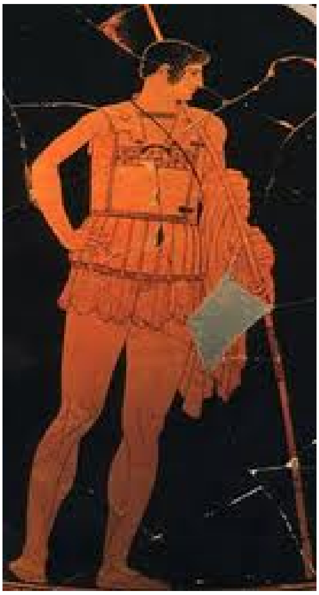
While Medusa's head was for the ancient Greeks an object of revulsion even after her death, the similar image among American peoples represented the sun or other deities, and was venerated by being regarded with a different attitude.

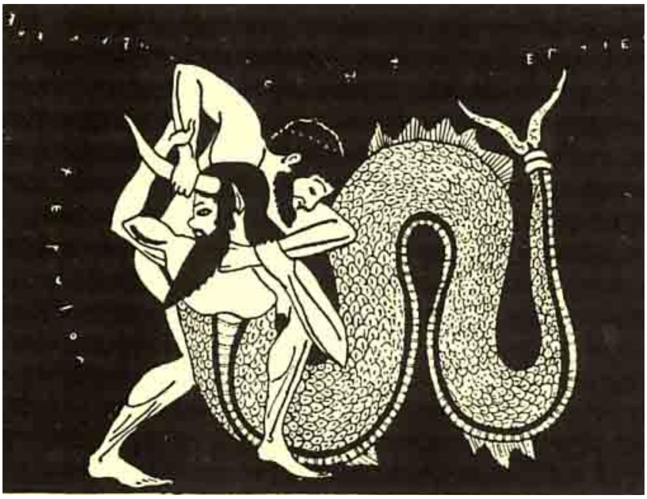
Let us make a comparison: the hammer and sickle symbol can be viewed positively or negatively depending on the ideology of the observer; the same can also be said of the swastika. Ottolenghi hypothesizes that the invasion of the Atlanteans recounted by Plato was conducted under the symbol of Medusa, thus detested by the Greeks.

Also on the myth of the Centaurs hypothesizes in distant times a war with another people who employed horses, which the Greeks did not yet know. The horses that were also an attribute of Poseidon, represented by Plato in the central temple of Atlantis. The horses that were the attribute of the Dioscuri, the horses whose heads were those of the Ashvini, the horses tamed and ridden by the Scythians.

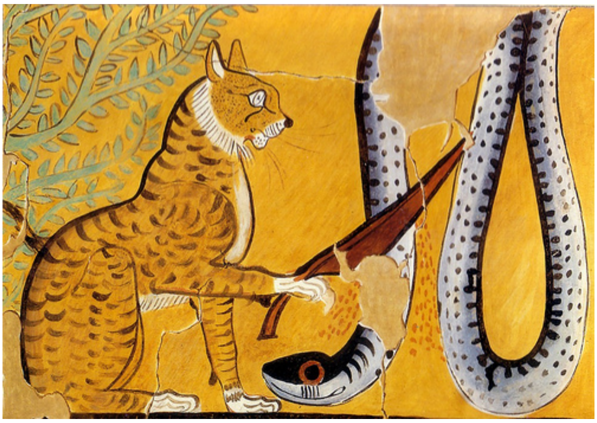
It then deals with the story of Achilles, son of Thetis, a goddess of the sea; Achilles is often depicted, as in the following image from a Greek amphora from 440 B.C., with the Inca sun symbol on his chest and with two serpents depicted on his bow, symbols of kingship among ancient pre-Columbian cultures.

Then there is another character from Greek mythology, Achelous, son of Ocean and the Nereid Thetis, in short a half-brother of Achilles.





During the fight with Hercules over Deianira, Achelous turned first into a bull, then into a snake, and finally into a bull-headed man, and Heracles tore off one of his horns. Then Achelouss gave up and surrendered Deianira to him, but demanded the return of his horn, giving him in return a horn of the goat Amalthea, that is, the cornucopia of abundance. From the drops of blood gushing from his wound were born the Sirens, also called Acheloids. Certainly the name, too similar to that of her half-brother Achilles, should be pondered. In a Greek vase from the 6th century B.C., preserved in Brussels, one can appreciate the struggle in which Achelouss appears with a serpent's body and bull's horns, all hateful symbols for the Greeks. The same concept is expressed in Egypt by the sacred cat of Ra chopping off the head of the serpent Apophis.



Clearly solar symbolism, then perhaps also applied to some historical event, such as the supposed war between the Egyptians and the Atlanteans.

Later, dealing with the Minoan civilization, which flourished around 2000 B.C., preceded by a Neolithic culture that left a cape of remains up to seven meters thick, he points out that while the men, in the frescoes, are painted a brick-red color, the women, on the other hand, are lighter, almost white. In this he finds a similarity to some Egyptian frescoes. According to experts this would be conventionalism, but for him it would be an indication of racial diversity. He tells us that in Egypt Semites were depicted in a yellowish-white color and that in several frescoes men appear in varying colors from tan white to brick. I confess that this had not convinced me, so I went in search of possible confirmation to what was claimed, in an old text published in 1939 by Oxford University, *Ancient Egyptian Painting* by Nina Davies and Alan Gardiner. Indeed, Semites are depicted in yellowish color in the tomb of Neferrompe, dating from 1250 B.C. Then the priest Kenro and his wife (tomb of Khnemhotpe, 1900 B.C.) are rose-colored pew; in the funerary procession of the tomb of Ramose (1400 B.C.) we see stylized figures of men, some brick-colored, some lighter. At Thebes, in the tomb of Menkheperra, high priest of Ammon during the reign of Tutmosis III (1475-1448), two foreign dignitaries appear offering tribute to Pharaoh; the first is a Minoan prince from Keftiu (Crete) and the second a prince from Khatti (Hittite). The two are painted with a rosy complexion, while an attendant of the Cretan, who carries a tray with a bull's head to offer it to Pharaoh, is brick-red, although he has a typical Cretan hairdo. Thus the hypothesis that there were men of different races in Egypt at one time becomes credible.

He is also interested in snake worship, of which there are traces in Crete. The snake always represents a telluric or demonic force (see the Bible), but sometimes it was an object of veneration, as in Delos or in the Americas before the Conquest.

What about the Ureo of the Egyptian crown? It was one of the symbols of royalty, like the beard. As if only pharaohs could have beards. Maybe the others were hairless? Only Khasekhem, a pharaoh of the Second Dynasty, is depicted without a beard. In contrast, Hatshepsut, the only woman he assumed as pharaoh, is depicted with a false beard. Note that the straight beard was the prerogative of Ptah and the living pharaohs; when they died the beard became curved.

But let's get back on track with Ottolenghi. He believed to identify similarities in Etruscan and Inca rituals, tracing that Diodorus of Sicily had spoken of the struggle between the Etruscans and Carthaginians for the conquest of an island in the Atlantic Ocean and that Leo Frobenius had pointed out the resemblance between Etruscan constructions and some ruins found on the island of Marajo, near the mouth of the Amazon. It must be said, however, that the Marajo culture would be, according to recent studies, relatively recent (600-1600 e.v.). I leave out the comments he makes about the various American and Egyptian pyramids, which take up themes that are all too familiar and uninteresting for our purposes.

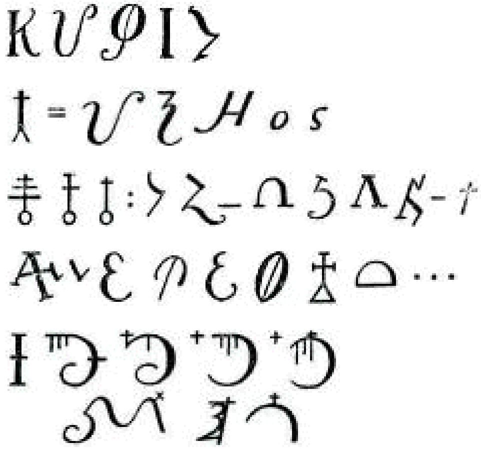
Curious, however, are some of his passages on scripture, in which he points out that writing by quipu appears to be attested in a range from China to South America, Central Africa and Arabia, In the Amazon Basin the Bora used them for counting, and in Central America the Cuna, Guaimi and Maya used them. So they were used in Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. In Palestine tax collectors used them until 200 e.v. In the early 1900s they were still appearing in Siberia and China, Okinawa and some Pacific islands. Note that quipu were also found in an archaeological context long before the Inca culture.

The Hawaiian word kipuâ denotes the craft and practice of knotting ropes; it is a variant that simply means knot

In China there are literary references to a knotted string system that preceded writing in the feudal bureaucracy. In early times knotted strings were used by the government, but the system was later replaced by ideographic writing. It is also mentioned in the *Tao Te Ching*.

But perhaps the most fascinating point of the book is when it recalls the research of Percy Harrison Fawcett, a British military man born in 1867, who lived in Ceylon, North Africa and South America. He had studied the Bible, the Epic of Gilgamesh, and developed the theory of a great antediluvian, earth-spanning civilization whose vestiges must have been hidden somewhere in the world. In 1906 he took part in an exploratory trip to the frontier area between Bolivia and Brazil to map the area on behalf of the *Royal*

Geographical Society. There he learned of a document dating from 1753 (manuscript 512), describing the journey of adventurer Francisco Raposo, who had ventured into the forests of the Amazon in the 18th century. The document, written in archaic Portuguese by the cleric J. Barbosa, and directed to the Viceroy of Brazil Luis Peregrino de Carvalho Menesez (still preserved in the Biblioteca Nacionaldo Brasil in Rio de Janeiro, manuscripts section, rare works) tells how Francisco Raposo set out at the command of 18 men, and crossed, after long vicissitudes, a vast swamp and difficult mountains. Once over the mountains they discovered clearings by the virgin forest. He thus found the ruins of an unknown city. Raposo and his men explored the lost city, equipped with cyclopean walls similar to those of Sacsayhuaman. In the middle of the city was a plaza with a tall black monolith, on which rested a statue of a man pointing north. Several strange inscriptions were noted, which I quote in continuation:



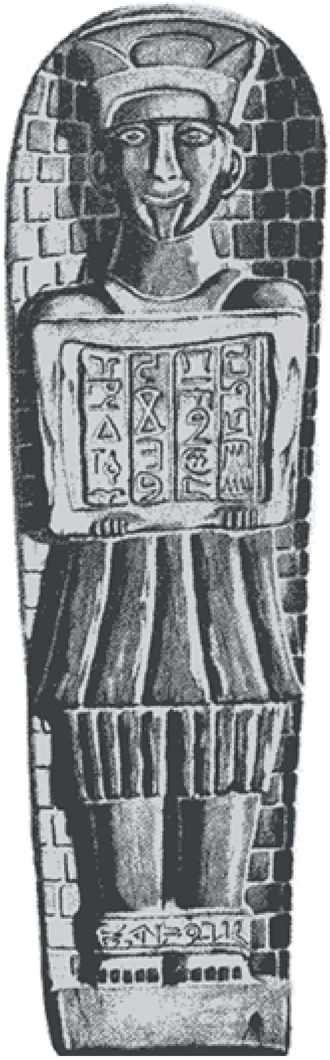
One of many fanciful stories about Eldorado and Paititi, or truth? Either way, Fawcett was bewitched by it and wanted to explore the area.

Another clue also prompted his exploration: a black basalt statuette from Brazil depicting a priest showing some kind of table with bas-relief signs, possibly syllabic.

The statuette had been given to him by writer Henry Rider Haggard. Fawcett believed that the lost city was located in the Serra del Roncador. The last expedition began in 1925. The explorer, with a son and a friend, wandered into the forest. They were never heard from again, swallowed by the green Amazonian inferno. Ottolenghi tried his hand at reading the mysterious signs engraved on the statuette, interpreting them as 23 alphabetic signs of a proto-Jewish phonetic script.

In his view, the very attire of the person depicted there would be that of a Jewish high priest (the *kohèn gadòl*), with ephod, tunic, belt and mitre, as per Mosaic prescriptions (Exodus, 28). It is not known whether the figurine also wore the prescribed linen underpants (Exodus, 28: 42-43).

But I will stop here, so as not to upset you further.



A SCIENTIFIC AND INGENIOUS APPROACH

What, then, is time? If no one asks, I know;

If I had to explain it to people who ask me about it, I don't know.

- St. Augustine

Italian Giorgio de Santillana, a physicist and historian of science, moved to the United States in 1936 because of racial laws; here he became a professor at the *Massachusetts Institute of Technology* and then at Harvard. His many works include *Hamlet's Mill*, co-written with Hertha von Dechend. This book focuses on the connection between the mythological stories of ancient Pharaonic Egypt, Babylon, Greece, etc., and ancient observations concerning stars, planets and, most notably, the precession of the equinoxes 26,000 years ago.

On first reading I had the impression that I was in a maze of warping mirrors, it seemed to me not a text without head or tail, but a work with too many heads and too many tails, a ball of yarn composed of many threads of different colors, tangled together, but not independent of each other. And it is impossible to come to a conclusion, too many themes leading us from one end of the world and history to the other. After reading the book several times I began to catch a glimpse of something emerging from the fog of time, a little, to paraphrase an image of the authors, like certain Chinese watercolors, in which a bit of the foliage of a tree appears, the roof of a distant building, some flower of a garden.

In this very interesting book, the two scholars argue that as early as 7,000 B.C. humans possessed scientific and astronomical knowledge, expressed through myths. They clearly state that in ancient times a precessional code was used, which is present in all myths and sacred architecture throughout the earth. We moderns conventionally believe in continued progress, but this is not the case. The ideas of the primitives are nothing more than the remnants of highly developed ancient civilizations. Only with this concept can we attempt to explain the complex realities of Babylon and Egypt, China and Greece, India and the Americas. But how to be able to understand the scientific significance of very ancient texts, seemingly only mythological? One has to find the technical pointers, which would certainly not be detected by philologists, unfamiliar with more strictly scientific concepts. A knowledge of astronomy, which is positively known to have been known as early as the time of the Sumerians, is necessary. But from whom had they learned it?

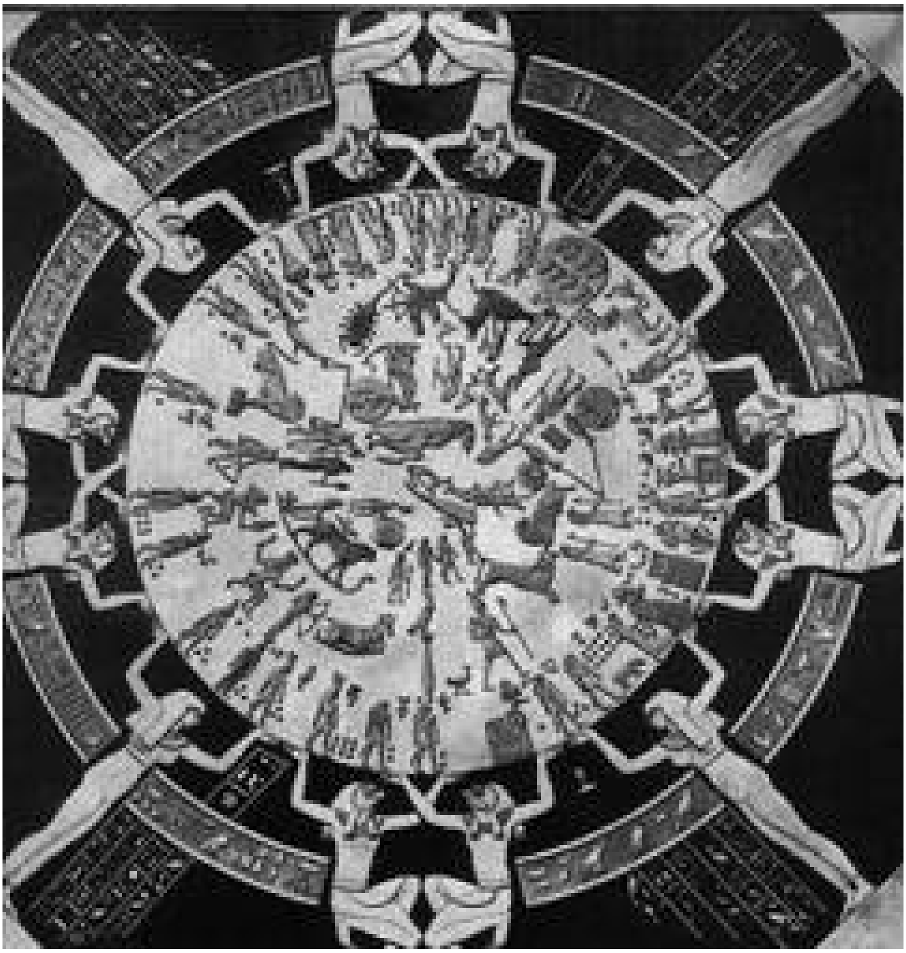
The book takes its title and start from Hamlet's Mill, the original Amlodhi mentioned by Saxo Grammaticus in his work "*Gesta Danorum*," a character who inspired Shakespeare. I will not go into the details of this ancient myth, because I believe that if someone really wants to follow this theme, they must necessarily read and reread the book until their eyelashes burn. The important thing here is to know that Amlodi was the son of Orvendel, the archer (like Orion), and he owned the Grotti mill that ground first peace and plenty, then salt and finally, when it fell to the bottom of the sea, rocks and sand, giving rise to the Maelstrom, the whirlpool, the crushing mill. Identified then with the navel of the sea; but in Sanskrit navel is said nabhu, which also means hub, plank. It would therefore be an astronomical myth representing the secular movement of the sun atraverse the zodiac signs and ages of the world. And each age, lasting thousands of years, has its *Götterdämmerung*.

There is a wealth of related tales, myths and traditions all over the world, into which they spread, in an age of great migration, from some center that our authors identify with some area of the Middle East, also lacing up with the Sumerians. The big problem is to recognize this ancient technical language, hidden under the veil of myths. It is assumed that these myths, explanatory of ancient "scientific" thought, were formed between 4,000 and 6,000 B.C., in the late Neolithic period. In the Babylonian myth Marduk uses the "jaw of the tapir" (the Hyades of the constellation Taurus) as a weapon, just as in the Hebrew sacred texts Samson uses a donkey's jaw. And we know that Samson corresponds to Orion the hunter, also called Nimrod in the Bible. And Orion's constellation stands opposite that of Taurus. Similar figures also appear in China, Indochina, and Polynesia. Orion blinded, Samson blinded, Krishna wounded in the heel like Achilles, Soslan (character of the Narti, ancient heroes of the Ossetian tradition) all of iron, but with vulnerable knees, having been only partially immersed in the milk of a she-wolf, in a myth similar to that of Achilles himself and other ancient heroes, a myth also perpetuated, with some differences, in Siegfried of the *Nibelungenlied*. However, even the bronze giant Talos had only one weakness, in his ankle, where he was struck by the argonaut Peante. And returning to Samson (from Shmsh=the sun), he had been condemned by the Philistines to turn a millstone, like the original Norse Amlodhi with his mill, then unhinged and thrown to the bottom of the sea. It can be understood how so many similar myths throughout the world have a common root, expressing a kind of interpretive code unknown to us, which was meant to enable us to establish the position of the planets and stars in relation to the earth, as well as to set forth a coherent cosmogonic structure. Just at the time of the Babylonian civilization, a "modern "type of notation of astronomical phenomena began to be presented, while the language of myths was still used. Technical language had been born. The content of thought had also changed. Whereas previously relatively long spaces of time, the cosmic "great years," were determined without coordinates, without writing, through a very long oral tradition in the form of myths, then the mathematical method made the description of celestial phenomena simpler, but reduced the scope of description to shorter times. Cosmogony also responded to a similar criterion: the breaking of a harmonic pattern, which had tilted the circumference of the ecliptic, the original sin in the Bible, the struggle between Asuras and Deva in the *Vedas*, the war between gods and titans in the Greek tradition, the events of the Aesir and Vanir in Norse mythology. Always such stories. The Titans cast into Tartarus by the Hundred-handers sent by Zeus, the fall of Satan into Hell, and so on. But only fragments have remained of all this covered by the oblivion and dust of the millennia. We may never be able to comprehend the full implications of our ancestors' thinking, hidden inexorably behind legends and symbols.

What can be the significance of the number 432,000, which appears in so many mythical contexts? And all the other questions that can be asked, how can they be explained?

De Santillana and von Dechend exhibited, as a fundamental theme, the fact that through a comparative analysis of myths from around the world, a scientific interpretation of them was exhibited, centered on the encoding of the precession of the equinoxes, not in mathematical form, but in narrative exposition, with mythological and symbolic aesthetic characters. In short, a large part of the mythology of every ancient civilization is astronomical in nature. All described in the language of symbol, for us, alas, now obsolete.

The hints of a musical interpretation of de Santillana's and von Dechend's text, evidently expressed in the book itself, also noted by Massimo Cardellini, a critical admirer of de Santillana's work, struck me for a simple reason: the mention of Bach's Art of Fugue as a means of exit from the sublunar world I had found many years ago in some books by Miguel Serrano, a Chilean friend, a very valid writer, also and especially, of esotericism. So any possibility of an image of the world is excluded by the authors themselves; there can be no formal plan of exposition, no structure, no scheme.

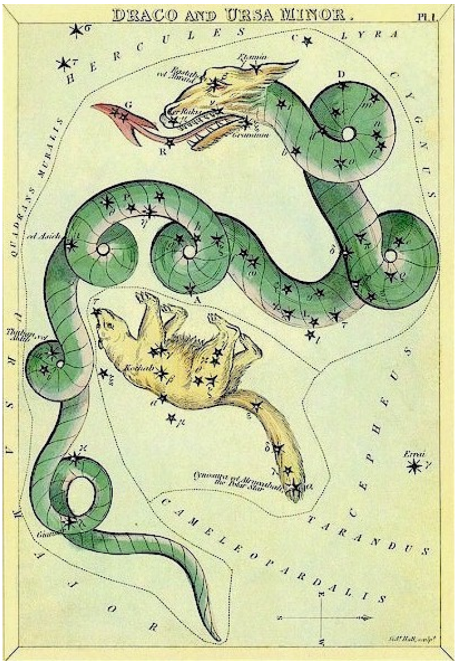


The authors expounded in the ways possible the ancient and secret science without being able to resort to modern consequential logic; they could do no more. The ancients thought and felt quite differently, their science was different, and for us, bound by logic, it remains incomprehensible in its exposition. This is undoubtedly a complex work, difficult precisely because of its non-schematic nature, a search for themes and problems never before posed, among myths, legends and tales among which we can get lost, as in a labyrinth of deforming mirrors, where we cannot ask for the help of the usual Cartesian logic, which tends to create a sequence of concatenations links. Instead, an absolutely archaic mentality reigns here. With a myriad of hints, of clues, of signs that give us the sense of seeing only vague reflected shadows, as if we were in the Platonic cave.

In America we find the same archetypes as in Mesopotamia and Siberia, India and northern Europe. The memory of a sacred science dating back more than 7,000 years B.C. is found everywhere.

De Santillana and von Dechend, in their book, related more than 1,500 myths from distant prehistory, an immense and incredible work. The ancient mythologies had the same stories, the same symbols, even the same characters, though with different names, the same recurring details, in spite of geographical and chronological distance. The two scholars were embarrassed by this unthinking situation, but they were forced to recognize in the numbers the data to calculate the precession of the equinoxes and other astronomical elements. Blunt evidence of this was the numbers needed to calculate the precession of the equinoxes, which can be found, almost magically, in all ancient traditions.

De Santillana noted that the origin of mythology was lost in the mists of time, so myths in 5000 B.C., before the beginning of our history, were already ancient. If we think that according to official science the discovery of the precession of the equinoxes would be attributable to the Greek astronomer Hipparchus of Nicaea, in the first century B.C., in light of the research of the two scholars we should revise all our views on officially recorded history and prehistory, seriously reconsidering our knowledge.



De Santillana and Von Dechend eventually turned to 'astronomy in an attempt to find a solution to the main theme of ancient mythology' - the existence or nonexistence of something in the remote north. But they failed to find a synthesis.

And Amlodhi's father was Horvandillus, with variants Orendel, Erentel, Earendel, Oervandill, Aurvandill. Etymologically, since he was an archer, the derivation from or = arrow seems logical, suggested by some exegetes, who explained the name Orendel as that "which works with an arrow." And from Earendel to Wilhelm Tell is a short step. Just to prove that myths live a life of their own and emerge even millennia later. Even the Őkuþorr of the Edda (Þorr of the chariot) is equivalent to the Hector, great horse tamer) of the Iliad. Perhaps the horses of the Scythians. Although Þorr's chariot was drawn instead by two goats. But let us also remember Apollo, who operated very insidiously with the bow, as well as the Homeric Philactetes, the best archer of the Iliad, heir to the bow of Heracles, who was wounded in the foot (by an arrow or - according to another version - by a poisonous snake); his father, Peante, formerly Argonaut, had also been a great archer and had killed the bronze giant Talos (in Cretan = sun), striking him (strange case!) right in the heel. Skill in archery was a characteristic prerogative of the Scythians, whose very name is said to derive from the root *skeud*, "to throw, to shoot," later passed into the Germanic languages (German: schießen, English: shoot) and would thus mean "archer." As was also an accomplished archer Paris, who fatally struck Achilles in the heel with an arrow guided by Apollo, also an expert with bows. His fate was inexorable: he was killed in turn by an arrow shot by Philoctetes, who had in turn been wounded earlier also in the foot by one of Heracles' deadly arrows. This sounds like a somewhat repetitive story that seems to be hiding something. Not to forget that Apollo could also use his deadly bow to inflict chastisement and pestilence on entire peoples with his weapon .

The myths continue. Kronos emasculated his father Uranus (the sky) and threw his genitals into the sea, from whose froth Aphrodite was born. Before that there was no such thing as time, which is a fixed measure taken from the revolution of the sky. With the emasculation of Uranus, the obliquity of the ecliptic was established and time began. The age of Kronos (improperly identified later with Saturn, who was an Italic deity) or of gold (also called the age of Gemini), dating back to 4000 B.C., would thus represent the archaic world, in which time flowed in the eternal returned. Kronos first became Prometheus, then Hephaestus. The end of the Gemini era would mark the fall of the Titans. And all the dances mentioned in ancient traditions, such as those of Neoptolemus, Mars Ultor, Skanda and Shiva, as well as the dances of the Hyades and Pleiades, are descriptions of the harmonious movements of the stars around their orbit.

The two authors, by correlating a huge amount of myths from our remote past, discovered some truly incredible things: all ancient mythology had the same topics and characters and the same numbers, appearing almost magically in every mythological theme. Recurring motifs found in China, Arabia and Egypt, at inexplicable geographical and chronological distances.

Myths and traditions that have come to us from all ages and from all the most unimaginable geographical locations, such as Native American, Chinese, Greek, Egyptian, Indian, Polynesian, Sumerian, Hittite, Scandinavian, and Germanic myths. All with the same characters, scenes, and figures.

After much research the two scholars, albeit with some embarrassment motivated by their academic training, recognized in the numbers in question the data for calculating the precession of the equinoxes. They were thus forced by the evidence of facts to declare that astronomical elements were contained in the common language of the myth, using the same common symbolic language, the same recognizable characters and the same literary motifs. But how had astronomical knowledge spread anciently in prehistory? The very creation of constellations, recurring throughout the earth, presents itself as the idea of a technical language expressed in the form of an archaic cosmology, in which the only relevant dimension is time.

According to de Santillana and von Dechend, it would seem that millennia-old information has been embedded in the roots of our civilization. For a mysterious reason the specific numbers for accurately calculating the precession of the equinoxes can be found in the oldest human traditions. Overwhelming evidence of their magnificent insight is found in the numbers for calculating the precession of the equinoxes, which appear in every ancient myth of any tradition.

Considering that the origin of mythology is lost in the mists of time, the two claimed that in 4000 B.C., at the beginning of our history, these myths were already present and ancient. We know that the equinoxes are the two periods of the year when day and night are of equal length across the planet. The spring equinox falls on March 20, while we have the winter equinox on September 22. With the phenomenon of precession, the spring equinox is reached each year moving forward by a small fraction of time, resulting in the sun moving very slowly through each of the twelve constellations of the zodiac. It takes about 2160 years to pass through each constellation, and the sun makes a full circle in about 25,920 years.

What are the numbers identified by the two scientists?

72 = one precessional degree

144 = two precessional degrees

2160 = thirty precessional degrees (a complete zodiac constellation)

4320 = sixty precessional degrees (two constellations)

25920 = 360 degrees equivalent to one precessional cycle.

Then the entire mythology turns out to be based not on true or suspected stories of extraordinary and courageous characters, but to inform us in astronomical terms of planetary orbits and the great cycle of the precession of the equinoxes, with the sky changing inexorably, starting with the position of the sun within one of the twelve zodiac constellations.

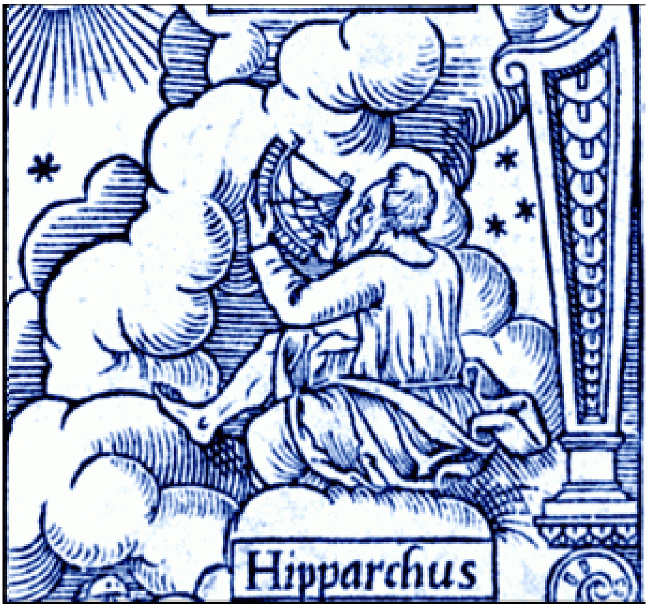
I note that the Pleiades are close to the constellation Taurus and represent its shoulders. In Greek mythology, Taurus represents Zeus, the king of the gods, who transforms himself into a white bull with golden horns to attract the beautiful maiden called Europa. When Europa sits on the back of the bull, he flees with her to Crete and therefore we see only the head and front of the Bull

Julius Caesar had his calendar begin on the day of the "heliacal rising" (the first appearance in the morning sky, before the Sun rises) of the Pleiades. The golden apples of the Garden of the Hesperides then turned into those of the Isle of Avalon, eventually reducing to Snow White's apple.

Heimdallr, identified with the Ram, possesses a horn, Gjallarhorn, which he may blow only once to alert the Aesir at the beginning of Ragnarok; we find the horn again in the *Chanson de Roland*, when the dying paladin Orlando sounds it to warn Charlemagne. Not forgetting the horns that bring down the walls of Jericho and Dhu'l Qarnayn the mythical two-horned ruler mentioned in the Qur'an, who would perhaps represent Alexander the Great,

It would seem that much of what is called "normal science" has degenerated into an acephalous and outsized endorsement of scientific orthodoxy and a generalized "consensus of opinion," which has reached the point where scientists repeat like parrots what others say in a kind of reflective mirror game, for fear of not coinciding with the opinions of their colleagues. In the end, no one knows how this plebiscitary consensus was generated, but anything outside of it is scientifically heretical and therefore mercilessly rejected.

Our past is not reconstructed by archaeologists and historians, but rather constructed *ex nihilo*, using archaeological remains that cannot speak for themselves, with their own voice. Instead, it happens that the remnants of ancient materials are collected, amassed and manipulated by scholars, who proclaim themselves with great and shameless impudence to be its sole and official interpreters, thus becoming active supporting accomplices of hypotheses first accepted out of caste solidarity and then imposed with the authority of the "ipse dixit" principle.



This has become the model for the conduct of science, which excludes a priori the uninitiated, that is, everyone else. The archaeological record is malleable and can be shaped at will, so that empirical measurements are binding and adherent to pre-determined ends. Much depends then, however, on the application of predetermined criteria. A classic example of this is the Darwinian theory of evolution: it is established that there is a line of relationships between different species, but it is by no means proven in which direction it proceeds, whether of evolution or involution. Darwinian theory assumes as an axiom (unproven) that we are dealing with evolution. Instead it is only a working hypothesis, assumed as an absolute truth. All of our science is a working hypothesis, tending to get closer to the truth but never being able to hit the mark. As demonstrated by Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, which clearly denounced the limits of knowledge; for natural laws do not lead to a complete determination of what happens in space and time, which is instead left to chance. So much for Einstein, who did not want to convince himself that God plays dice.

MYTHS AND STARS.

The theologians and intellectuals who so zealously practice demythologization today resemble an army of ants that have entered a full kitchen: they devour and destroy all the delicacies they find there, but they don't stop telling each other about how delicious they are.

- Ernst Jünger

In the fragments of ancient traditions, preserved in the pages of Diogenes Laertius, we find attributed to the Greek astronomer Anaxagoras this sibylline assertion: -In the beginning the stars rotated in a "toliform" manner.- What does this mean?

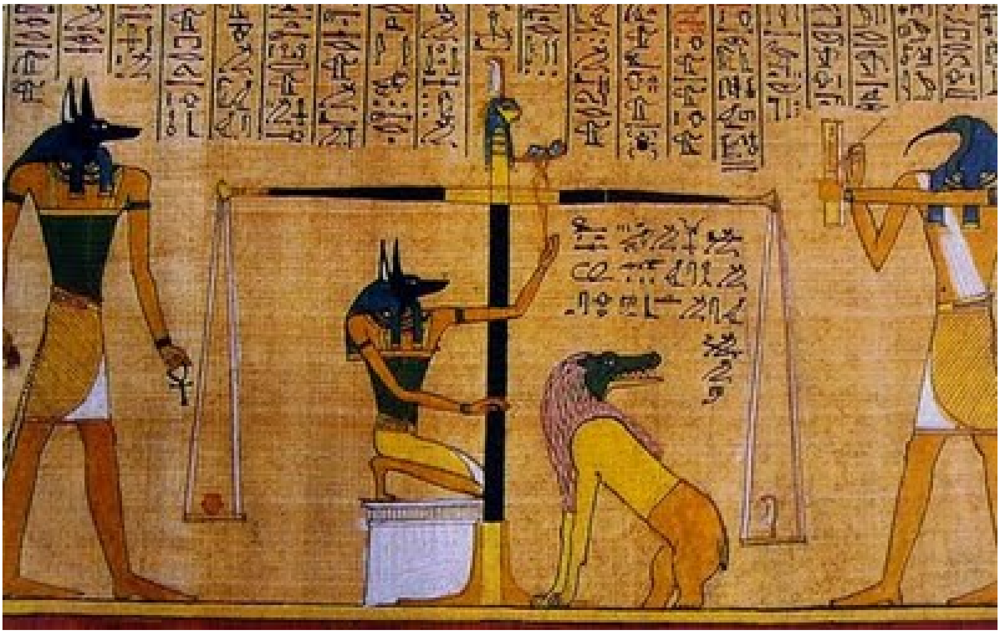
It means rotating in a horizontal plane, like the θόλος, or "dome," of an astronomical observatory. Anaxagoras himself had defined the motion of the stars more clearly when he said it was a motion, not ὑπὸ, "under," but περὶ, "around" the earth. Anaximenes would seem to have had the same idea, having compared the primitive revolution of the sky with the rotation of a man's headgear on his head. Another explanatory expression (I do not know whether by Anaxagoras or his followers) was this, "In the primordial ages the polar star, which was continuously visible, always appeared in the zenith, but later it underwent a certain shift." Thus we see that ancient astronomers believed that at the beginning of the world the celestial pole was at the zenith, and that the stars revolved around a perpendicular axis. It is impossible for an astronomer to have invented such a theory out of thin air. On the other hand, if this interesting and seemingly paradoxical idea was typical of the ancient world, one can imagine how such a story might have been preserved among the Chaldean and Babylonian astronomers, from whom the early Greek scholars derived alquite a few lessons. And that the Chaldeans and probably the Egyptians had this very idea is not a concept that appears here for the first time. But now let us ask some interesting questions: When and under what circumstances would this alleged "shift" of the pole have occurred? Was it gradual or sudden? Had the ancients assumed that it was a natural occurrence or that it was the result of a catastrophe ? Our hypothesis would lean toward the latter supposition. The only rational and credible explanation is that the declination or shift of the pole was the cause of the transfer of the scenario of human life from the area around the north pole to more southern areas. Now if, because of the Flood or the coming of the Ice Age, the survivors had moved from the antediluvian Arctic abode to the northern slope of the Pamir Plateau, the probable starting point of historical postdiluvian humanity, the impression given by the sky at this lower latitude would have been just as if in a great convulsion of the world the sky itself had shifted, and the polar dome had tilted. The astronomical knowledge of the survivors most likely had enabled them to understand the real reason for the apparent change, but their descendants, reduced to a wild or nomadic life in their new and inhospitable home, might easily have forgotten the explanation. In time such children could easily have turned the incredible story handed down by their fathers into strange myths, such as the dark tale of a mysterious shift in the sky due to a terrible natural cataclysm. It is hard to believe that it is pure chance that in various ancient authors we find this allusion to a shifting of the sky that occurred in ancient times, which has never been seriously explained. In Plato's Timaeus, there is mention, attributing such words to an Egyptian priest of Solon's time, of "a declination of the bodies revolving around the earth," and this declination is presented as the true explanation of the partial destruction of the world commemorated in the myth of Phaeton. As this destruction was by fire at first glance there would seem to be no relation to the destruction at the time of the Flood; there is nothing in the context to suggest such a connection. Fortunately, however, we have in Hyginus a more complete version of the myth, from which it would appear that the Greeks had assumed that Deucalion's universal flood was providentially sent to extinguish the conflagration caused by Phaeton's fall at the head of the sun's steeds. Here the connection between the fall of the sun chariot and the flood appears absolutely direct and clear

But if the primitive human habitation had been located near the pole, early humans would have had one day and one night in a year. Moreover, during the break in that strange day the sun would have risen, not from the east, as now, but from the south. Do the traditions or holy books of the ancient world make any mention of something like this? A partial answer to this question we have already found, and another can be found in the beliefs of the ancient Norse. The Danish writer Frederik Klee (*Le Deluge: Considération Géologique et Historique sur les Derniers Cataclysmes du Globe,* 1847) thought it "remarkable" that Scandinavian mythology informs us that, before the establishment of the present order of the world, the sun, which now rises in the east, sprang from the south. Do you find this confirmation surprising?

Two types of days are also found described in the Iliad and Odyssey. In what appear to be the more archaic parts of the poems, the day is a period of one year's duration, especially when the lives and deeds of the gods are described; in the apparently more recent parts the term has the current meaning of a twenty-four-hour period. Egyptologist Karl Richard Lepsius also recognized the existence of a one-year day in Egypt and other ancient chronologies, as mentioned as well by the mythographer Palaifatos and the encyclopedic treatise *Suidas*. In all the evidence found so far, and the list could go on, there are many references to the idea that in remote antiquity day and night lasted a year. And where could this idea have come from? Was it a pure imagination or was it derived from some observation of nature? The only logical explanation is that in very ancient times humans had lived near the pole. Identifying the cradle of the human race with other places presents insurmountable difficulties. Various fragmentary allusions by the earliest Greek poets to rivers and the Ocean would seem to imply an ancient conception of an original center of the world, with the four rivers and the consequent circulation of water throughout the earth. Thus, according to a couplet of Homer, it is from the Ocean that "all rivers and all seas and all springs flow"(Iliad, XXI). The same idea is found in Euripides' *Hippolytus*. There is, therefore, a source from which all the waters of the world come. The same idea is expressed by Hesiod in his Theogony, where all rivers, as sons, and all springs and streams, as daughters, are traced back to the Ocean. Then we have a steady descent of all the waters until they reach the underworld, in the lower hemisphere. And here the waters form the river system of Hades. Sometimes these hellish rivers are represented in numbers of four, in symmetry with the water system of the upper hemisphere. All of them, moreover, like those Iranian underworld, seem to proceed forward and never downward, until they are seen flowing from the roof of the cave of the nymph Styx and from there falling, under the earth, to the abyss in the deep night. To have a unified system of waters, one would have to locate the Ocean-Source in the extreme north and sky. That this position was the original one descends from all the mythological accounts of the home of Ocean and Thetis and is confirmed by many clues connected with such myths, such as those of Eridanus, Achelouss, the birth of Zeus, and especially those of Atlas and his sons. In the oldest Akkadian, Assyrian and Babylonian literature there are expressions that seem clearly to indicate the presence among these peoples of a very similar conception about the waters of the earth. The same would also apply to Egyptian literature, but in both cases the data are still too sparse to be conclusive.

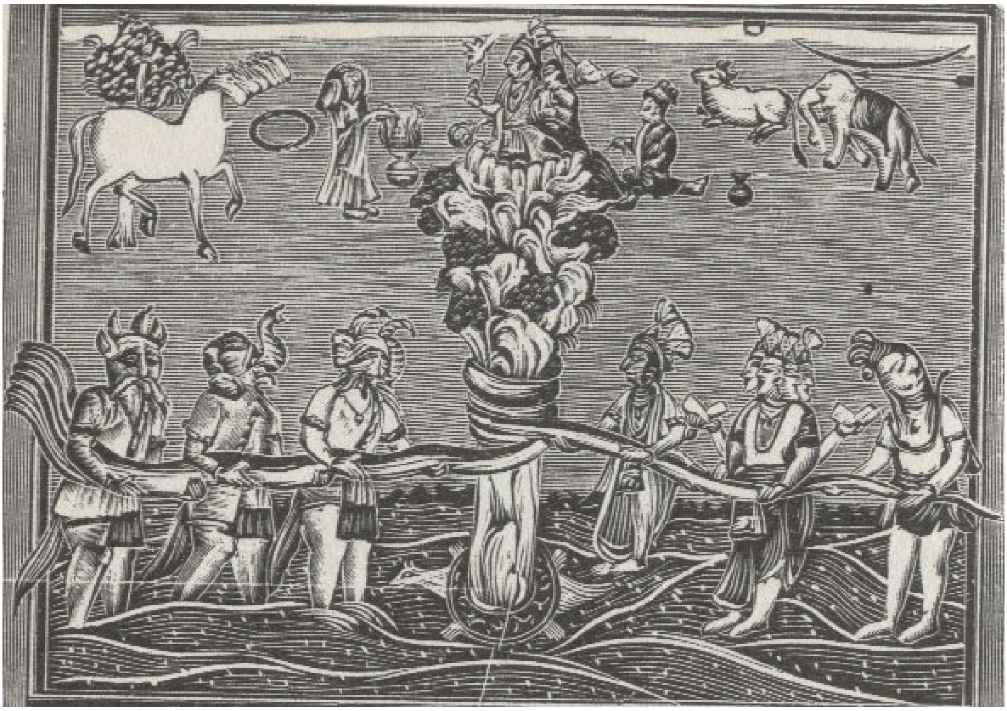
In the center of the Garden of Eden, according to the book of Genesis, there was a special tree, pleasant to the eye, and its fruit was good. At first glance, it would perhaps not seem that a study of this tree in the various mythologies of the ancient world would help us locate the primitive paradise, but if the Garden of Eden had been right at the North Pole, then a beautiful structure in the center of that garden would have had cosmic significance, as a kind of sacred spot or place, intended for divine worship. We know that the Norse conceived of the Yggdrasil tree as the axis of the world; its roots sank into hell, its branches towered over the world of men, its top reached to the sky of the gods. It was their poetic way of saying that the whole world is an organic unity, pervaded by one life. Since the trunk coincided with the axis of heaven and earth, it is clear that it was an idealization of the primitive tree of heaven.

Plutarch, when he tells us about the disappearance of the oracles, reports a supernatural voice announcing the death of Great Pan during the principate of Tiberius. It seems that this funereal message referred to the end of the Age of Aries and the beginning of the Age of Pisces. One interpretation of this cryptic message tells us that the Great Pan of Plutarch's story is Sirius, the astronomical reference star for the cycles of time and nature. Its fall, precessional or metaphorical, would have represented Pan's death. Recall that Sirius in ancient Egypt represented Isis with her measuring rod, being a fixed point in the cosmos. But it also represented the end of a world, a culture that would be supplanted by the emerging Christianity. In ancient traditions, reference is often made to events related to the stars. The star always heralds an event, a guide in the path, signals the birth of a divine personage, and so on. In short, the star has always represented a religious, supernatural symbol, often anticipating a misfortune, like a heavenly premonition. Even today there are those who fear that comets are harbingers of misfortune. According to Giorgio De Santillana and Hertha von Dechend, mythology was not the transfiguration of human stories, but represented astronomical data.

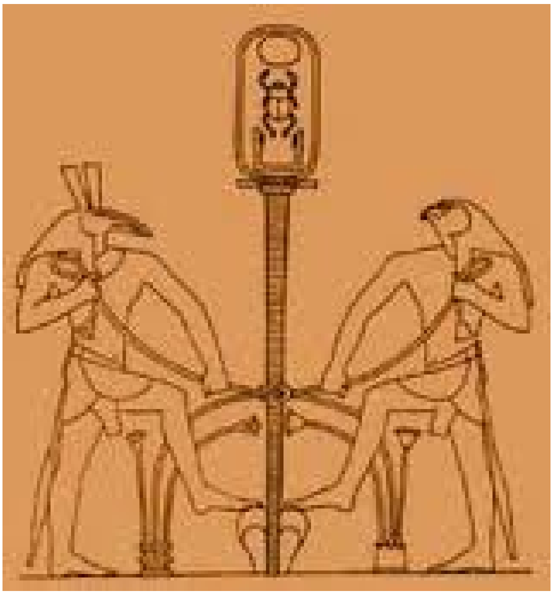


Analyzing the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, hermetic in its symbolic content, they found more than 320 astronomical terms and came to the conclusion that astronomy had to be used as the key to understanding it. The two scholars, after an initial deep skepticism toward a possible astronomical origin of the myth, had to surrender to the evidence of the facts, coming to the conclusion that all myths from the distant past were nothing more than an astronomical science veiled in the language of myth. The amount of evidence gathered seems irrefutable, with the same symbols and characters in the different myths. The same precessional reading code appears in all of them, containing the numbers used to calculate the precession of the equinoxes. These numbers appear in all the oldest traditions. De Santillana believed he had stumbled upon a very ancient science lost in the meanders of time. We are talking about myths created and disseminated well over 6,000 years ago, a time when they must have already been ancient. In the*Bhāgavatam* we read that "Vishnu gave directions to the Deva to cooperate with the Asuras in whipping the ocean of milk to extract the nectar of immortality and promised to deprive the Asuras of their share of ambrosia. The Lord put all the Deva and Asuras together with the Mandara mountain on the back of his eagle and took them to the ocean of milk. Around the mountain was coiled the huge Vasuki snake that was to be used as a whipping rope.

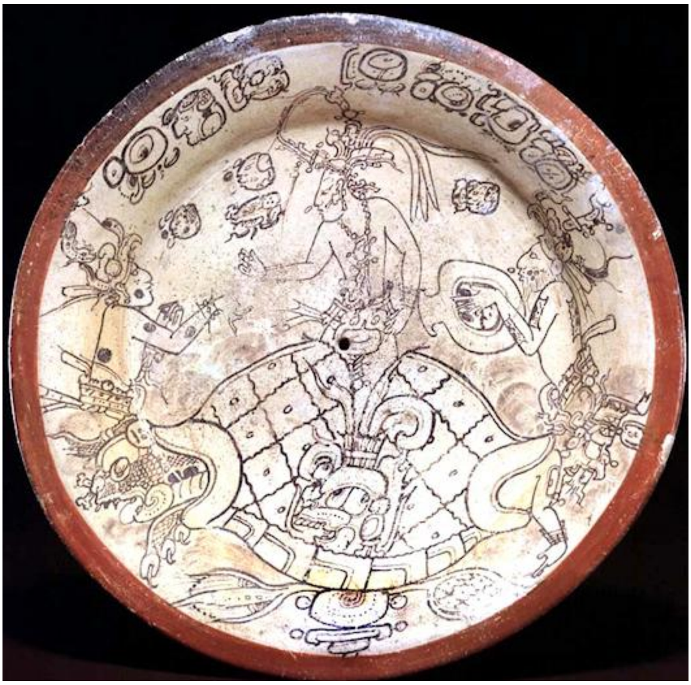
They began to whisk the ocean, but as the two groups spun the mountain around with the snake acting as a rope, the mountain fell plumb into the great ocean.Seeing the Deva and Asuras disappointed, Vishnu entered the ocean of milk assuming the form of a huge turtle (Kurma) and lifted the great mountain on his back." In the whipping of the cosmic ocean of milk in Hindu tradition we can see the Asuras, whose heads show the typical typhonic features found in the Egyptian god Seth. Recall that the Asuras had the power to create and cause creations by means of magical force and the illusion of existence (maya). In the cosmic milk shake, a symbolic allegory of the precession of the equinoxes, we also note Mount Mandara, used as a pivot resting on a tortoise.



And what do we find in Egyptian iconography? Horus and Seth intent on turning a paddle in a churn, Horus with the characteristic head of a hawk, while Seth has that of a jackal.



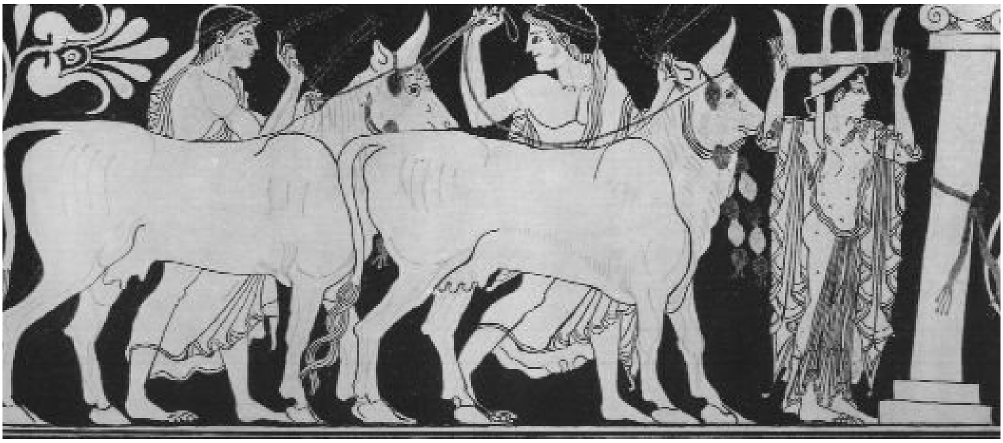
In Mayan tradition we can find the turtle as a constellation, whose head happens to be Orion. And yet we also find it in iconographic representations of the world. One detail: the name of the turtle is of Greek origin and means "inhabitant of Tartarus." The images are all too explanatory. However, one cannot explain why such similar symbologies are found in such distant places and eras.



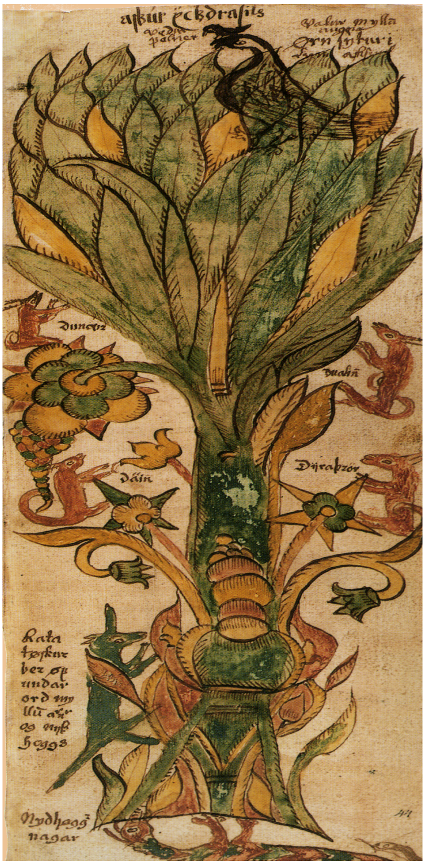
In the far north of Europe we find the myth of the Maelstrom, inspired by the real existence of deep eddies caused by the tide in the vicinity of the Lofoten Islands. Another whiskery, like the Amlodi mill that keeps grinding at the bottom of the sea? Myth later translocated to the Mediterranean as Charybdis, as rightly noted by Felice Vinci in his very valuable book "*Homer in the Baltic*."

As an archetype, we find the shape of an hourglass appearing in several traditions. The bottleneck of the hourglass marks the entrance to the realm of the dead and coincides with the stars at the foot of Orion. Ethnographer James Mooney, in his research on the myths of the Pellirosse. tells of a whirlpool of waters leading toward the realm of the dead and of a maiden who shoots an arrow into this whirlpool, obtaining fire. This myth is also associated in other elements with the very ancient Greek myth of Prometheus. It must be said that the American myths can find an explanation by juxtaposing them with the precession of the equinoxes. For the Pellirosse, the "earth" is the plane joining the four points of the equinoxes and solstices, and is therefore quadrangular. Remembering that the sun passes from one sign of the zodiac to another every 2160 years and that we go from Pisces to Aries to Taurus to Gemini, it can be seen that at the time of Gemini the equinoctial meridian cut across the Milky Way. It is therefore no accident that the Chinese still celebrate the festival of the Milky Way (Silver River). It must be remembered that de Santillana confessed that he allowed himself to be drawn back into the whirlpool of time, transforming himself from a scholar of Greek history into an explorer of past eras in search of the origin of scientific thought. He began to investigate myths and religions, seemingly far removed from science, being struck by the fact that too many exotic myths had several points in common with Greek mythology; so he spent many years collecting data, filing them away and comparing them. These were myths that had already been hidden by the dust of time when Greek civilization had begun, and even then they were no longer understood. It was also possible to ascertain the existence of other symbols, such as the spindle representing the same movement, or the tree representing the axis of the earth. Since the sun traverses the zodiac every 25,920 years, taking about 2160 years through each constellation, the phenomenon has precise mathematical characters that can be calculated, but require adequate time to understand.

For all the traditions of ancient peoples, the point where the sun rose at the spring equinox was sacred and was identified with the constellation of the zodiac in which the sun transited on that day. At present, the Christian church still uses the equinox to calculate Easter Day (the first Sunday after the first full moon simultaneous with or following the March equinox), so Easter Day may occur on March 22 at the earliest, however, never later than April 25. The March equinox marks the first day of the year for a great many calendars, and many populations still celebrate it. I have often had the honor of being invited to the spring equinox festival celebrated by the Azeris, a legacy of the Zoroastrian religion as a sharing of love. But it is also celebrated in Iran, Afghanistan, India, Turkey, Zanzibar, Albania. We are currently at the end of the Age of Pisces, at the dawn of the Age of Aquarius, which we will fully enter around 2,600. Granted that these cycles have a much longer duration than human life, a crucial question arises: how could ancient peoples have become aware of the precessional phenomenon? It would have required continuous and precise observation over many centuries, taking careful note of it. We know that many peoples were interested in the Milky Way, both in the Old and New Worlds, from Heracles moving Hieron's herd there to African and American myths (which saw it as a road for herds), from Isis creating it by scattering ears of grain, to Cherokee legends concerning a dog scattering stolen flour (the mill again?).



It has already been seen how in so many places, from India to northern Europe and many other places, the universe was conceived with a giant, sacred tree at its center that formed its axis. In Norse mythology at the end of the cycle the tree will collapse, announcing with its trembling the end of the world. Its trunk is constantly threatened by four curved-necked deer, called Dainn, Dvallin, Duneyrr, and Durathror, who nick its roots. Then a new tree will be born whose base will be determined by the cross of the solstices and equinoxes. The sky is always represented, in all mythological traditions, supported by 4 columns or pillars, representing the 4 constellations at its ends. Sometimes the sky is supported by 4 deities, but this does not change. The pillars join the axis of the world at the celestial north pole. These are always and consistently celestial events.


askur eckdrasils
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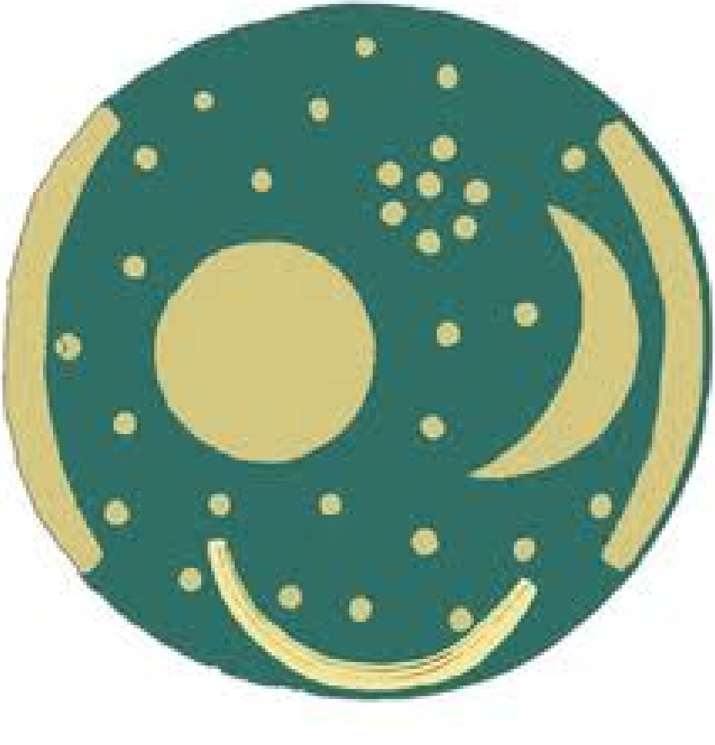
Rata toskur ber op undar ord my llu arnar og nyd heggs
Nydhogg nagar

However, one thing must be said: the oldest image of the cosmos is not Egyptian, as almost everyone assumes, but was found in Europe and specifically on Mount Mittelberg, near the town of Nebra, Germany, a few tens of kilometers from the Broken, the mountain known for its strange optical shadow effects and legends of witches and demons, recalled by Goethe in the Night of Valpurga of his Faust. It is the Disk of Nebra, which some grave robbers had found in 1999 in a hollow in the mountain. It is a bronze plate, circular in shape, with a diameter of about 32 centimeters and weighing about 2 kilograms, with gold applications (from England) representing the sun, the moon and the Pleiades (always the Pleiades!), as well as possible other stars, as well as on the sides two horizon arcs and at the bottom a kind of solar boat (typical of Egyptian civilization). The two horizon arcs indicate an angle of 82 degrees, just as when the sun rises and sets on the horizon at the latitude of Nebra, during the period between the two solstices. It dates from between 1700 and 2100 B.C., thus at least 2 centuries before similar Egyptian finds.



A SPECIAL STUDY

The function of language is not to inform,

But to evoke.

– Jacques Lacan

Giorgio Terzoli, a researcher from Bologna, a lover of the ancient mysteries, deserves a very special mention; he believes he has deepened de Santillana's studies and updated them. A member of the Italian Archaeoastronomical Society, he has collaborated with RAI in several broadcasts. Continuing his research on primitive cultures, he claims to have discovered an ancient universal language, that of myths and sacred architecture, which he dates back 13,000 years. From an analysis of a huge number of myths he would have deduced the presence of a unique system throughout the world. His interpretation, which seems at least worthy of mention, is expressed in what he referred to, to distinguish it from de Santillana's work, as Codex III. He points out that when de Santillana was expounding the results of his studies, no one had yet pointed out the similarities between important archaeological sites and certain astronomical representations. Now many believe that the Giza site in Egypt dates to 10,450 B.C., but years back de Santillana had already realized that the ancients knew about the phenomenon of the precession of the equinoxes, as well as the substantial singularity of the myths, but he was still unclear about the dates reported by the ancient sites. However, de Santillana and von Dechend had seen how ancient cultures had drawn their knowledge from a single common source and expressed it in mythological form, coming to the conclusion that some event was related to precession.

According to Terzoli, who continues this view, expanding it, the precession of the equinoxes was used as a great cosmic calendar intended to convey a message that has come to us after more than 13,000 years. Like a message in the bottle thrown into the sea by a castaway.

Terzoli insinuates that the presence of the number 12 in mythologies is inevitably accompanied by a circular concept: the 12 knights of the round table, the 12 apostles, the 12 wise men, the 12 Tribes, and so on. They symbolically represent the 12 zodiacal constellations crossed by precession. So far nothing new; it is known that the number 12 had long been linked to solar symbolism. From here, however, the Bolognese scholar has extracted a precessional calendar that he believes was used by the ancients 12,000 years ago, at the beginning of the Age of Leo, by which each specific constellation corresponded to a date.

Therefore he considered that in this calendar the years are defined by the different eras of precession, which functions as a cosmic clock with a cycle of 25,920 years. Thus the celestial North Pole slowly shifts, stars change their elevation relative to the horizon, every 72 years the constellations indicating the vernal equinox shift one degree. All of these changes are scientifically predictable. So by recording the position of a star at a given time, it will always be possible to determine when it rises again. Summing up from about 13,000 years ago:

Leo from 10960 to 8800 B.C.

Cancer 8800 to 6640 a.e.v.

Gemini 6640 to 4800 a.e.v.

Taurus 4480 to 2320 B.C.

Aries from 2320 B.C. to 160 e.v.

Pisces 160 to 2000 e.v.

Noting that all myths are expressed in the same symbolic language, this author hypothesizes that an ancient people, who inhabited our planet in very remote times, may have sent us a message. However, he would have had to know the precessional mechanism very thoroughly. According to official, academic, established science, there never existed in ancient times peoples with such scientific knowledge. Yet....

The Hindus, Egyptians and Greeks all have the constellation Orion in their mythology, signaling the various precessional phases. This constellation is always present, although with different names. It seems impossible that the ancient myths each arose by spontaneous generation and had different origins, given their substantial concordance.

Terzoli reminds us, among other things, that the stars of Orion are the ones Odysseus must follow to return home.

But there is more: myths point out that the transition from one sign of the zodiac to another would represent a disturbing event; and there would be, in his view, a particularly problematic one, that from Pisces to Aquarius.

As the author, a scholar of the specific discipline, explains, archaeoastronomy is the science that studies archaeological findings related to the observation and study of celestial bodies by ancient cultures. So for him, the first most important step is astronomical knowledge, identifying variations in the starry sky over time.

Having identified a starting date (era of Leo) and a unit of measurement in precessional hours, Terzoli believes he has succeeded in filling in all the mythological boxes, noting a strange fact: the message would be updated in different epochs, however, leaving both the departure (beginning of the era of

Leo) and the arrival time (end of the era of Pisces) unchanged. The researcher listed the Codex symbologies as follows:

12 = The number associated with the circle symbolizes the 12 zodiac constellations that the precession of the equinoxes passes through in 25920 years

6 = The final date of the message showing us the end of the sixth precessional era starting with the Leo era (i.e., the end of the Pisces era)

7 = the beginning of the seventh precessional era starting with that of Leo (i.e., the beginning of the Aquarian era)

Winged or green lion = represents the constellation Leo.

Seals , seals, trials, labors endured by the hero to achieve his goal = the precessional eras

Philosopher's Stone = the understanding of precessional phenomenon, through which to access astronomical mythology.

Mythological animals, lions, scorpions, whales, turtles, bulls always refer to the precessional epoch from which the myth originated, indicating the date of its origin.

Sun-related gods always refer to the relative precessional era, and Terzoli makes a list of them:

Horus, who in an Egyptian tomb indicates the sun's position in the middle of the sign of Taurus (2450 B.C.)

Teshub, Sumerian and Hittite solar deity, represented as a Bull (4000 B.C.)

Apollo, ancient Greek deity, who resided among the Hyperboreans, in a happy place without disease or old age; his journey ends in Pisces.

Aplu, the Etruscan equivalent of Apollo.

Freir or Freyr, deity of the sun and fertility in the Edda.

Agohya, Hindu solar deity.

Amaterasu, sun goddess in the Shinto tradition in Japan

Huitzilopochtli, sun and war god of the Aztecs.

Mention was made above of the labors and trials faced by the archetypal hero, whose best-known examples in Greek mythology are Heracles, Odysseus, Jason, Theseus, Perseus who represent the very figure of man who in order to become a hero must acquire knowledge, facing symbolically equal trials and dangers, trials of consciousness. Not forgetting Oedipus. Thus we find Heracles killing the Lion, Odysseus following the path indicated by the stars of Orion, Jason conquering the Golden Fleece of Aries, all trials that would refer to precessional moments. The author laments (and I associate with him) that man has thrown ancient knowledge, thousands of years of science, to the wind, limiting himself to a paltry science of only 5,000 years, as opposed to the tens of thousands of years that Homo sapiens sapiens has. Seeing the myths of Heracles, found in so many different ancient cultures, perhaps under different names, one can see that often his deeds do not seem so astounding as to merit being handed down to posterity. So why immortalize them?

Heracles, son of Alcmena and Orpheus, was conceived in three days and three nights. Why was this?

A simple answer for all such questions: these are symbols.

Herodotus (Histories, II,43) mentions Heracles as one of the 12 deities of Egypt, from which the Greeks would derive their Heracles. Perhaps the Egyptian god was Khonsu (the traveler),who was combed with a side braid, which Egyptologists believe would represent a child symbol. However, I should mention that the Sea Peoples, who invaded Egypt during the reign of Rameses III, are represented at Medinet Abu with a braid on their temple. Randomness?

The killing of the Nemean Lion would be a feat of a common hunter, so why such emphasis? An invulnerable Lion, which came from the Moon, could hardly be real, but evidently the constellation is mentioned.

What about the myth of the Golden Fleece? Jason wanted to regain the throne of Iolco, usurped from his father Aeson by his half-brother Pelias (remember Hamlet who wanted to avenge the death of his father murdered by his brother Claudius?), he therefore had to go out to conquer the Golden Fleece, the skin of the golden Ram found in Colchis near King Aeetes; he gathered for this venture a group of heroes, the Argonauts, who would take their name from their ship called Argo (it seems, however, that the origin of their name is not this, however it is irrelevant to us). With the help of the sorceress Medea, daughter of Aeetes, they succeeded in their venture and, after the many vicissitudes that characterized the ship's entire voyage, returned to Iolcus to reclaim their father's throne. All a symbol? There is a point that Terzoli makes that would seem to prove it: Jason and his companions carried their ship on their backs 12 full days across the Libyan desert until they found the sea again, across which they arrived at the kingdom of Aeetes, who was the son of the Sun. There is then an interesting parallel with the Theseus myth: both heroes receive help from the king's daughter, in one case Medea (=astute), in the other Ariadne (=very pure); both fight against monsters (bulls and Minotaur); both betray the woman who helped them, and so on. The same myth told in allegorically different form.

But what would be the message that would be passed on to us?

The message would be about the three stars of Orion's belt, those that are represented by the three pyramids of Giza, where there is also the Sphinx, i.e., the Lion. An ancient example of sacred architecture. A great mystery. A message that Terzoli summarizes as follows:

1. All the mythology of antiquity is astronomical in nature, based on the effects of the precession of the equinoxes, which the ancients knew perfectly well.

2. Astronomical mythology is uniform throughout the world, as if it had a common origin and then spread throughout the earth.

3. Monuments at major archaeological sites were constructed to record particular precessional moments and highlight a particular precessional era or date.

4. ancient mythology and sacred architecture are an integral part of knowledge that the planet's ancient inhabitants wanted to pass on to future generations.

5. Most likely the astronomical mythological language is the famous universal language before the Tower of Babel (the Tower is-among other things-the sixteenth Major Arcana of the Tarot).

6. It is possible, through ancient iconographies, to trace back to the era in question, when the creators of the images indicated to us what precessional height the sun was at. To give an example, if we find the Sumerian sun god Teshub portrayed at the beginning of the astronomical age of Taurus, we can trace, through Giorgio Terzoli's Codex, to the corresponding date, that is, approximately our own 4,000 B.C.

How to leave a message that can be understood after thousands of years?

Civilizations pass, languages disappear and change, scriptures become unintelligible.

But precessional motion is the only cosmic, precise and eternally valid clock on this planet; to set a date it is enough to acquire celestial references and reproduce them on earth.

If our civilization suffered a huge catastrophe, such that it disappeared, what would be left?

The survivors would study the phenomenon that would affect them most carefully, understand its cyclical nature, and try to leave a trace of it for future generations.

But how?

Write.....but on what materials, in what language, indicating what identifying moments....here is the problem.

Museums are full of inscriptions without deciphering, most materials are perishable, dates are relative and refer to cultural references (the year of Consul Guy, during the reign of Caius, tot years after the prophet's birth,....).

All that remains is a message expressed in symbols on stone.

His theory would involve a message from a distance 13,000 years ago that would warn us of a reversal of the earth's magnetic poles. As expected, scientific circles were initially very skeptical; however, they have since begun to reconsider, and the hypothesis of a possible upcoming magnetic reversal is no longer so fiercely opposed. In 2003 the phenomenon was studied by Nasa and several universities in the United States, arriving at three conclusions that would confirm the hypothesis of the Bolognese researcher: 1. the Earth's magnetic field is tending to zero, a phenomenon that would herald the possibility of an upcoming magnetic reversal; 2. the frequency and cyclicities of the event were confirmed; 3. from the analysis of the magnetic orientation of some lava flows in Hawaii, scientists found that in the last magnetic reversal-about 780,000 years ago-the Earth changed its polarity by 6° per day; over the course of 24 days the North Pole had become the South Pole and vice versa, and in that time the Earth would have remained almost 300 years without a magnetic field.

Giorgio Terzoli's research has been published in some very interesting books, such as " Interview with the gods," "The Code of the Gods" , "2012 - The Last Mystery of the Maya."

A precessional degree has been scientifically calculated as 71.6 years. Mythology would have used the number 72, rounding it up. And this number appears throughout the precessional code, resulting in a series of other interrelated numbers. Dividing 72 by two gives 36, which added to 72 gives 108; multiplying 72 by 10, 100, 1000 gives 720, 7200, 72,000, while multiplying 36 by the same numbers gives 360, 3,600, 36,000. Dividing 108 by 2 gives 54 and then its multiples 540, 5,400, 54,000. The sun crosses a zodiac sign in 2160 years, a number that divided by 10 gives me 216, while multiplied by 2 gives 4320 and its multiples (43,200 and 432,000). These numbers are found in myths all over the planet and in sacred architecture. How would Terzoli prove this?

Thus:

- According to the Edda in Ragnarok the warriors (Einherjer)who come out of Walhalla to fight against the wolf Fenrir number 432,000.

- The sacred altar of the Hindus is built with 10,800 bricks.

- In the *Rig-Veda* each stanza consists of 40 syllables totaling 432,000 .

- The Babylonian historian Berossus determined the duration of the universe to be 2,160,000 years.

- In the *Rigveda*, the oldest of the Vedic texts, there are exactly 432,000 syllables.

- In the Hebrew Kabbalah 72 angels are named through whom the divine modes (Sephirot) are manifested.

- In the Revelation of St. John, the number 144 appears once and 144,000 three times.

- In the long Mayan computation appear time cycles of 7200 days (katun), 360 days (Tun,) 720 days (2 Tun), 720,000 days (Baktun) .

- In India the *Puranas* speak of four ages of the earth (Yuga) that together last 12,000 divine years. The durations of these four ages are respectively 4800 years (Krita-Yuga), 3600 years (Tetra-Yuga), 2400 years (Davpara-Yuga) and 1200 years (Kali-Yuga).

- In the Egyptian myth of Osiris, 72 men, incited by Seth, are said to have conspired against him.

- There are 72 principles of the devil.

- At Angkor Thom, the Bayon wall is topped by 54 towers, each with 4 sculptures for a total of 216 depictions, while the main courtyard is surrounded by a wall with 5 gateways at each of which is a double row of sculptures: 54 Deva and 54 Asura for a total of 108 sculptures per bridge and a total of 540.

To this list I must add (for my part) that, as related in the ancient Irish tales (*Lebor gabàla Erenn*, Book of the Invasions of Ireland), when God confused the languages of men, the one language then spoken by mankind split into seventy-two different idioms and men could no longer understand each other and the Tower of Babel was no longer completed. Men dispersed all over the earth and spread their languages everywhere. In short, the myth should be understood as a figurative message. Like the wheel of a giant mill, the celestial sphere turns continuously with movements that we can evaluate with the relationship between the sun and the constellations over the year. The four key points can be identified with the equinoxes and solstices. In our time, the sun rises in Pisces at the spring equinox, in Virgo at the autumn equinox, in Gemini at the winter solstice, and in Sagittarius at the summer solstice. Soon, because of the precession of the equinoxes, the spring equinox will be in Aquarius, and so the other points will shift.

In Egypt we have already found the symbolism of Horus and Set, who are often depicted pulling the two ends of a rope wrapped around an axis, symbolizing the precession of the equinoxes. There are many mythological depictions referring to the celestial machine in other peoples. Thus among the Maya, in Iceland, Japan, New Zealand, Finland. The sequence of precessional numbers 54, 72, 108, 144,180,216 etc. can be found in another surprising case: there would exist a network of monuments and sites arranged on a grid of latitude and longitude coordinates, linked to the precessional code..

Between Giza and Angkor there are 72 degrees of longitude; in the islands of Kiribati (72 degrees from Angkor and 180 from Giza) astronomically aligned structures have been discovered, as yet insufficiently studied.; and 144 degrees of longitude from Angkor, lies Rapanui, better known as Easter Island. I still recall that the three pyramids of the Giza plain in Egypt exactly mirror in position and size the three stars of Orion's belt in 10450 B.C., at the dawn of the spring equinox.

At that time the three stars of Orion's belt were at the lowest point of their precessional cycle. The same date, 10450 B.C., would also be inferred in Cambodia where the Angkor temple precessionally mirrors the sky seen on that fateful date. Why would several ancient civilizations, geographically and temporally distant from each other, point us to the same precise time reference with giant monuments, astronomically aligned and indicating key numbers for understanding and calculating the precession of the equinoxes? What would be the message, so important as to drive men to such efforts? The memory of some terrifying event or the omen of an equally terrifying future? There are hundreds of myths concerning the universal flood, and mass extinctions and ice ages would seem to confirm such a hypothesis.

The first to expound this astronomical rationality and thus to provide an astronomical reading of the myth had been Charles François Dupuis ("*Origine de tous les Cultes, ou la Réligion Universelle*") who based his interpretation on the zodiacal cycle, read backwards due to equinoctial precession. Four thousand years ago, the sun opened the year in Taurus and religion, art and political order were imbued with this image: the ox Bees in Egypt, the bull father of nature cracking the Orphic egg from which all the universe emerges, the bull immolated to the god Mithras. When the sun entered Aries new religious forms arose: Jupiter Ammon with ram's horns and so on. The adventure of the Argonauts begins from Taurus to lead to the conquest of the Golden Fleece of Aries. In the Hebrew cycle we find Isaac,who is replaced in the sacrifice by a ram; the sacrificer was to be his father Abram (actually Avram), whose name was changed by God to Abraham (Avraham); according to Jewish tradition the change responds to God's will to express a change. In contrast, in the Hindu language Abrahm means uninitiated; the change to Abraham represents an initiation, thus the link between the old and the new religion. But, according to Hindu tradition, Rama is the name of the seventh reincarnation of Vishnu who participates in the epic of Ramayana, in which the arrival in India of the Aryan tribes led by Ram, who later becomes Rama, which is a Celtic term meaning ram, is recounted. Hence the Christian iconography of Moses with horns, over and above the explanation that would have it be rays (for the Hebrew term krm, which can be interpreted karam or kerem, meaning horns or rays).Hence Abraham would begin the Aries cycle, in which Moses later appears. Then the Pisces era would begin, with Jesus and his religion symbolized by Pisces (ichtis). And since the sacrifice of Isaac results in the substitution of an Aries, we see here a law of zodiacal periodicity that makes the change of the sun's position relative to the constellations coincide with a change of religion.

At the archaeological site of Nevali Cori, near Göbekli Tepe in present-day eastern Turkey, dating back to 9000 B.C., a cult building was found facing southwest, possibly toward Giza, according to some archaeologists. An observer placed in the midst of what must have been the gateway at dawn of the spring equinox in the year 8000 B.C. would have seen the constellation of the whale rising, and near it the constellation known as the Eridanus, the celestial river. The latter, depicted as a river flowing from the star Rigel

(Orion's left foot) and through the whale's legs, has been referred to many times as the celestial counterpart of both the Nile and the Euphrates. To the east of this constellation it was possible to see that of Cancer, or the zodiac sign that had defined the precessional era that began on 8,000 B.C. and ended on 6,640 B.C. This constellation was originally represented by a tortoise that appears in a myriad of depictions, carvings and sculptures of the peoples of Mesopotamia, who thus extolled the era in which their civilization had flourished. And before Cancer/Turtle, the constellation Leo was dominant. Ancient astronomy, in addition to calculating time, influenced other various aspects of ancient cultures. We also find celestial bodies in religion as divine representations. A return to the astronomical setting of myth came in the early 20th century by the discoverer of the archive of the Hittite kings, Hugo Winkler, who gave an outline of the Babylonian civilization of 4000 B.C. as governed not by the sword but by astronomical wisdom. Temples served as astronomical observatories and banks (where exchange was set at a ratio of 13.50 between gold and silver, equivalent to that between the days of the solar year and those of the lunar month) and served as sacred dance halls. In 1933 Scottish engineer Alexander Thom found north-south alignments to the North Star in the outline of the stones at Callanish (a site similar to Stonehenge). On the other hand, it is known that Stonehenge, despite modern arbitrary reconstructions, contained astronomical alignments. Dr. Phyllis Pitluga, a researcher at the Adler Planetarium in Chicago, after decades of study of the Nazca lines in Peru, came to the conclusion that the giant spider figure represented the constellation Orion and the three straight lines connected to the figure were directed toward the three stars of Orion's belt. This Orion belt that continuously appears in all parts of the world.

A Coptic text preserved in the Bodleian Library in Oxford written by the Coptic Abu'l Hassan Ma'sudi states that the two largest pyramids were built 300 years before the Flood by the Prediluvian king Surid, who allegedly dreamed that a huge asteroid would fall to earth when the heart of Leo reached the first degree of Cancer. In the Book of the Dead it is written that the Sun's movement in the sky is guarded by two lions, the guardians of morning and evening.

Hypotheses, unanswered questions.

A SUNKEN CIVILIZATION IN THE SEA OF CHINA

The main affliction of man
Is the restless curiosity of things
That he cannot know.

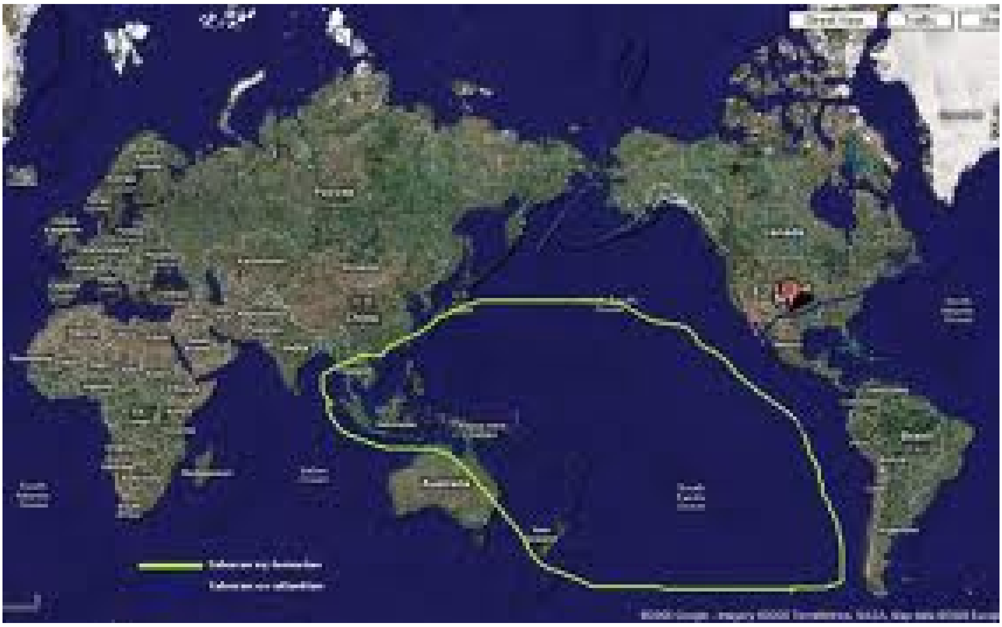
- Blaise Pascal

Stephen Oppenheimer, a British physician who practiced for many years in Malaysia, Nepal and Papua New Guinea, besides being an authority on the interactions between nutrition, genetics and infections, particularly thalassemia and malaria, has written some interesting books on human prehistory. Among them the most interesting in our field was *Eden in the East: the drowned continent of Southeast Asia* , published in 1998. This brilliant researcher hypothesizes that the civilizations of Asia originated in Southeast Asia, based on several disciplines. Since this book is readily available, we will briefly summarize the main data contributed in support of his thesis.

Geology has proven the existence of several large floods, at different places and times. The ice sheets of the polar ice caps melted dramatically three times, 12,000, 9,500, and 6,000 years B.C., respectively, most likely due to the transfer of warm currents from tropical to subpolar regions caused by precessional movements, resulting in the melting of ice masses and the dizzying rise of sea levels. In tradition they gave rise to the development of myths that overlapped into a single flood. The last would be the one that submerged the continental shelf of China, which is currently 50 to 100 meters below sea level.

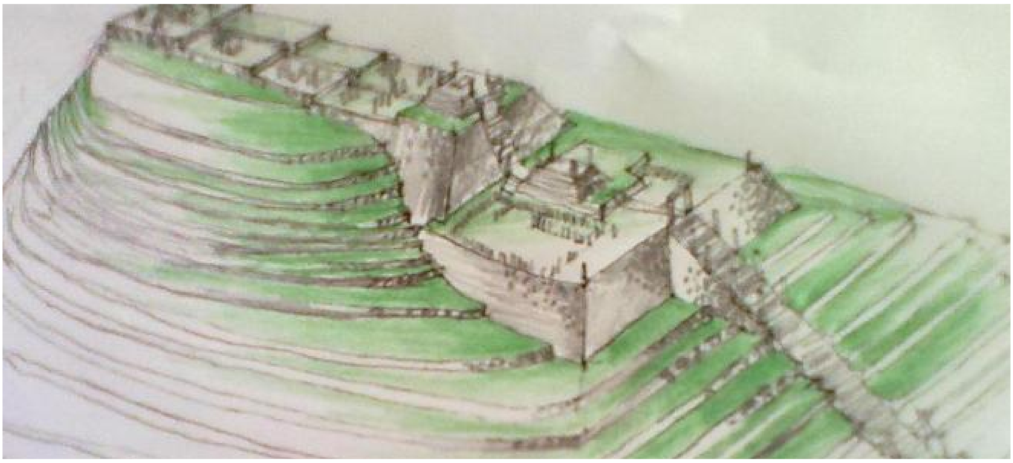
Oppenheimer, like others before him, also considered linguistics, recalling the genealogies of the Bible subsequent to the myth of the tower of Babel. Based on the studies of the already well-known Johanna Nichols (*Linguistic*

Diversity in Space and Time) he identified Southeast Asia as the epicenter of linguistic dispersion after the last ice age. Thus there would have been an



expansion of populations from Southeast Asia that would have moved and colonized the Pacific and the New World. And he also took up again the themes proposed by genetics, such as mitochondrial DNA, discussed earlier, and other genetic markers. Returning to the subject of the flood, which has generated myths in almost all parts of the world, the scholar noted that there have been many of them, smaller in magnitude than the three main ones, of often different origins: flooding of continental shelves, tsunamis, exceptional flooding, displacement of waters from inland seas, etc. But if there was a primordial flood so catastrophic that only a few human beings survived, it seems logical to assume that the memory of this new beginning of life was transformed into a myth such as the creation of the world from the waters. This would probably date back to 9500 B.C. Hence would come the myths of animals, almost always birds, going to the bottom of the sea to collect a handful of earth, which then grows giving rise to dry land. Other myths, on the other hand, see sea and land covered by a thick blanket of clouds, harking back to a long winter that would be followed by a sudden immense catastrophe. In this case an ice age could be hypothesized. Regarding the Bible's flood, it is noted that in the first chapters of Genesis two different stories are superimposed, that is, descriptions of two different floods. One can recognize the two versions by the name by which God is referred to: the "priestly" and "jahwist" versions. In the first version, a deluge caused by great rains over several days is mentioned, while in the second version the cataclysm occurs in one day, probably from the sea and the sky. At the end of the flood the motif of the bird seeking the land appears. The story is similar in Sumerian, Assyrian, and Babylonian myths in Mesopotamia, so it would seem that the drafters of Genesis drew on traditions learned during the Babylonian exile. Now the Sumerian and Paleo-Babylonian texts date back to at least 2,000 B.C.

In contrast, the Greek myths of the Flood refer in part to a catastrophic water transfer from the Sea of Marmara to the Black Sea, dating back to 5000 B.C., and in part to much earlier events. In the Iranian traditions, as we saw earlier, we have instead a "frost flood," which could be traced back to a brief ice age. Incidentally, the hero Yima would seem to have some affinity with the Hindu Yama and the Scandinavian Ymir. In India we have the flood of Manu warned by the fish, attested in the *Satapatha-Brahmana*, a Hindu religious procedures text, predating the priestly version of Genesis. But the fish and flood motif also appears among the Austronesian peoples. We will not stay here to list all the related consimilar myths, which we invite you to find in the cited book. Also in Southeast Asia, as in Europe, megalithic constructions have been found, the size of which has created more than one headache for modern scholars because of the size of the stones used.



The recent discovery (2012) of the so-called Gunung Padang (= Great Place of Ancestors) pyramid on the island of Java, which is dated to between 6,500 and 12,500 years ago, should its antiquity be confirmed, should give us pause for thought. It would be older than the pyramids of Egypt and would prove that an advanced civilization existed near Indonesia 12 millennia ago. Scans made with georadar revealed an underground corridor and two doors. Magnetic anomalies recorded would also indicate an underground room and a possible accumulation of metals.

Oppenheimer then found some families of myths ranging from Polynesia to Finland, including a complex of stories that begin with a dark chaos of darkness and waters and end with the separation of land and sea, much like the priestly version of Genesis. And it even cites a Maori myth about the creation of man that contains, amazingly, red clay, god's blood, life breath, sternum, and the creation of woman, named Eevee, from a rib. And now let us marvel a little more: in Polynesian "ivi" means bone, for the Sumerians the healing goddess of Enkil's diseased rib was Nin-ti (the Lady of the Rib), and in Hebrew the name Eve means "she who makes life." So we should not be surprised that in much of Central Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia and Southeast Asia there is a myth that woman is created from a man's rib and is called Ivi. But the story does not end there: the tree of life with the snake and the bird also appears (which we also find on Yggdrasil) and the quest for immortality later lost because stolen by the snake...

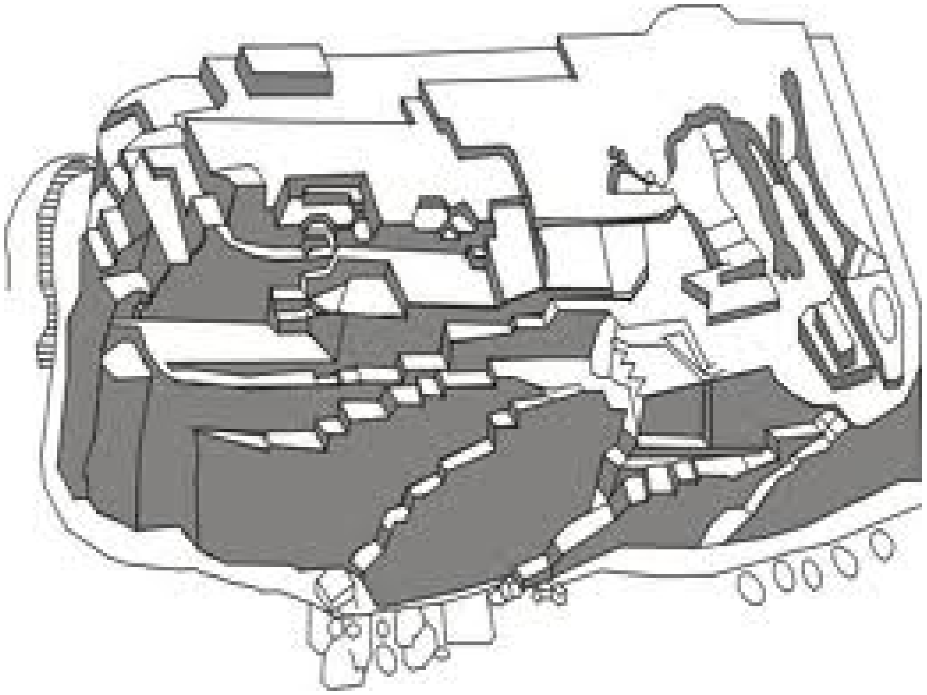
The first couple had two sons, Kulabob and Manup, archetypes of Cain and Abel. In addition to the symbolic theme of fratricide, the ethnic and cultural conflict as a result of population expansion and migration, most likely in Neolithic times, is highlighted. Here, too, we find the two brothers fighting , often over a disputed girl (as in a Jewish story reported in the *Midrash*, in which Cain kills Abel for not giving him his own twin sister in marriage). The differentiation between the descendants of Kulabob and Manup is still felt locally among indigenous Papuans and immigrant Austronesians in ancient times. The story is that of two brothers, one of whom seduces the wife of the other and, after a struggle, strays eastward. A variation of the myth is the reversal of the roles of the two brothers, depending on the language and ethnicity of the narrator. One constant, however, is given by the lighter skin of Kulabob, the brother who departs on a boat. This is a myth that appears in sagas throughout the Pacific islands, albeit under different names. In the opinion of leading anthropologists, such as Alice Pomponio of St. Lawrence University, these myths have a historiographical character, referring to events dating back to a very distant time unknown to us.

Overall, Oppenheimer collected geological evidence of a flood that would have affected the coast of China, took up many linguistic themes, applied sophisticated genetic marking techniques, linked together myths and legends of different origins, studied folkloric factors, and came to the conclusion that in extremely remote times there was an influx of peoples and culture from Southeast Asia, arriving in places far apart: the Lapiths, navigators of the Pacific, would have arrived, for example, as far as the Solomon Islands 30,000 years ago. As it turns out, the last Flood would date from about 6000 B.C., while many myths would have arisen earlier, in antediluvian times.

Recently, in 1985, a large underwater structure was discovered off Yonaguni Island near Okinawa, Japan, which attracted the interest of many scholars, with divergent opinions on its origin and significance. Images of it from photographs and underwater footage were circulated, readily available on the Web and originating various comments and interpretations, regenerating the 19th-century diatribe between catastrophists and uniformitarians. The notion of global catastrophes had been dismissed as naive science fiction, but now reappears as acceptable. Indeed, we have seen how many ancient cultures have handed down with hundreds of myths the idea of a great disaster that would liquidate much of humanity in ancient times. It is possible that evidence of some ancient civilization emerges from shallow seas, for it is presumable that at any time man has settled near the sea, originating urban agglomerations even of some importance, whether for the purpose of fishing or trade. Most of the Ice Age coastal plains have been underwater for a long time, and it is safe to predict that for marine archaeology the future can certainly be very promising. The complex in question really does appear to be man-made in origin, despite many opinions to the contrary. Several Japanese archaeologists and geologists have argued that the pyramidal conformation off Yonaguni Island is of artificial origin, while several American geologists are of the opinion that it is a natural formation. However, the structure is a source of controversy. It appears as a construction made of wide terraces, ramps and large passages. According to the report of Japanese scholars, marks have been documented on the stones that would indicate that they have been excavated. Not only that, tools used for this process would also be found in the area, as well as carvings would be discovered. There is also a small staircase in the structure, which would seem to confirm the artificial nature of the complex. Probably, as suggested by Dr. Schoch, a geologist and geophysicist, the structure was of natural origin that someone in ancient times had modified and enriched, adapting it to their own purposes. This kind of activity seems to have been widely used in ancient times throughout the archaic world, when a natural formation suggested a form, which human hands then went on to modify for ritual or purely practical purposes. A well-known example in Europe is the Externsteine, while in Brazil we find Sete Cidades. Not forgetting the Sphinx.

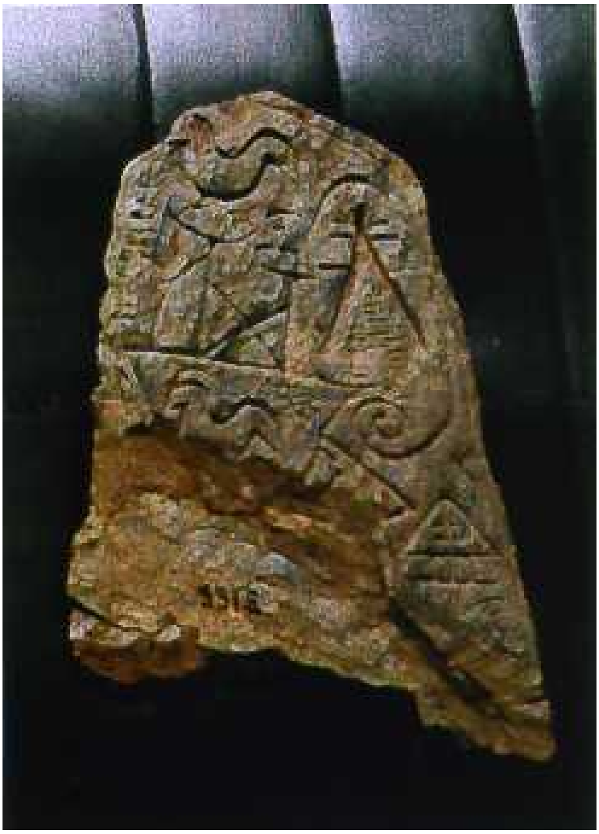
The real big problem, the obstacle faced by those who claim Yonaguni's natural origin, is that the area sank into the ocean at the end of the last ice age, perhaps about 10,000 years ago, which would imply that an unknown eastern civilization would have developed a high degree of organization thousands of years before known western civilizations. If this structure turned out to be artificial, the history of 'prehistoric man would have to be rewritten.

A large monolith resembling a human head with eyes and mouth has been studied there. A large platform extends at the base of the head, and a road leads to this platform. The surrounding basal platform is quite large (about 2500 m2) and more than two thousand seated people could easily take their seats there. All this would suggest a worship or gathering area for a community. The terraced structures with a canal undoubtedly look artificial, created by modifying a huge pre-existing monolithic outcrop. The canal and rectangular terraced structure may have served as a pier for the handling, loading and unloading of small boats before it was submerged. This at least is the opinion of Professor Masaaki Kimura of Ryukyu University.



At this point I feel compelled to Inform that many petroglyphs have been found in Japan, 3000 of which are found at sites or at sacred hilltops, worshipped by native inhabitants probably in prehistoric times.

Even today in Okinawa, natives believe in a legendary homeland, Nidai-Kanai, which is believed to have been located far out in the ocean, where their ancestors lived an eternally happy life. Perhaps a version of the legendary Mu? According to marine archaeology a geological catastrophe must have occurred about 12,000 years B.C.



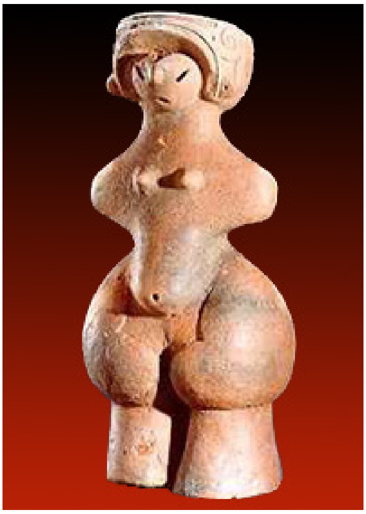
Twelve stone tablets have been found in Okinawa that may provide some clues to solving the enigmatic origins of human languages and scripts. One feature of the Japanese petroglyphs is that 30 percent of them could be deciphered with Proto-Sumerian and Sumerian cuneiform characters. It is not known exactly why Japanese petroglyphs correlate with Sumerian writing.

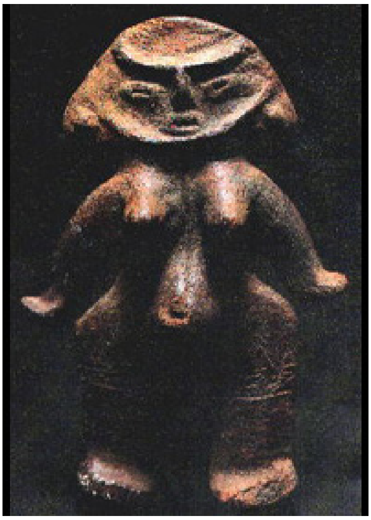
The only supposition is that in remote prehistory Sumerian seafaring tribes, threatened by the Akkadian invasion, fled by sea, so some tribes would have reached prehistoric Japan, as suggested by scholars at Harvard University. Professor Emeritus Barry Fell supported this theory, adding that he was sure that the Sumerians had reached the Far East and even the Americas.

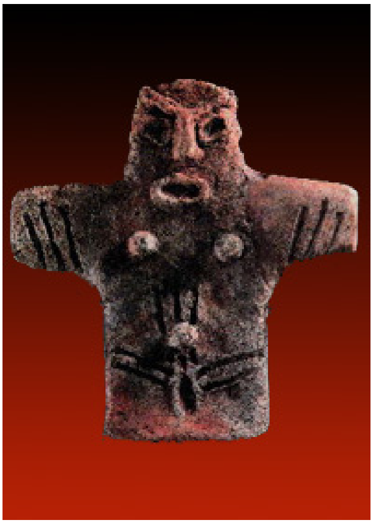
The mystery may be solved in the future, with further research that will hopefully dispel doubts one way or the other.

Of course, knowing human stubbornness, doubts will probably always persist, and everyone will hold their opinion out of bias, regardless of the results of future research.

Just to create a stir and fuel readers' unease, I add that clay sculptures have been found in Japan, recalling both prehistoric Venuses and bird women, as can be seen below .







HERMAN WIRTH

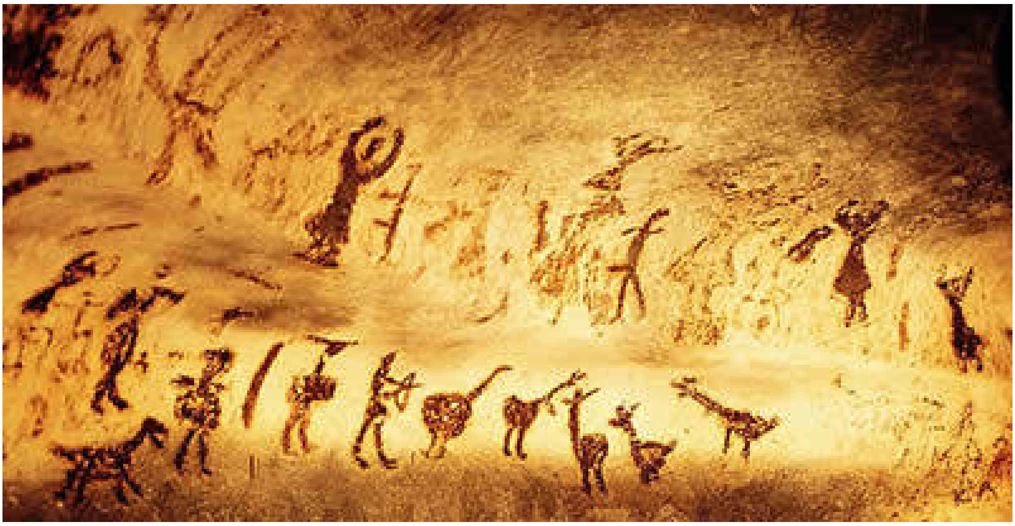
This is the essence of science:
Ask an impertinent question
And be prepared to receive a relevant response.

– Jacob Bronowski

Who was this person? Not many people know him. Herman Wirth Roeper Bosch, a Dutchman, was born in Utrecht in 1885, the son of a gymnastics teacher. He had studied German philology, folklore, history and musicology at the Universities of Utrecht, Leipzig and Basel. In 1910 he graduated with a thesis on the Dutch national anthem, published a year later in The Hague. By 1909 he had been appointed lecturer in Dutch philology at the University of Berlin. In 1914 he enlisted as a volunteer in the Prussian army, and soon after became a liaison officer in Brussels. Always very active, he maintained contact with the Young Flanders group, and also took an active part in the proclamation of Flanders' independence in 1917, which lasted until 1918 with the defeat of Germany. Meanwhile, in 1916, he had been appointed professor at the University of Berlin. In 1920 he attempted to create a movement in the Netherlands similar to the German *Wandervogels*. In 1923 he settled in Marburg an der Lahn as an independent ethnographer, beginning his extensive research on European prehistory. In 1925 he joined the National Socialist Party, but left it in July 1926. In 1928 he published his most important work, *Der Aufgang der Menschheit*, in Jena. At that time among his most loyal disciples were Friedrich Hielscher and Wolfram Sievers. Sievers himself later worked with Wirth at various levels for the *Ahnenerbe*, although he was only a party man. Wirth was one of the founders of the *Ahnenerbe* and was one of its most influential members; actively involved in the study of historical writing and symbols. In 1935 and 1936 he traveled for months to Scandinavia for study purposes. In 1938 he broke with the *Ahnenerbe*, under dual pressures from academic circles, which considered him an amateur, and Nazi ideologues, who were indignant with him because he had not hesitated to proclaim that any cult of the leader was historically a sign of decadence.

The first pamphlet against him had been written in 1931 by Prof. Paul Hambruch, with a rather heavy title: *Die Irrtümer und des Phantasien Prof. Dr.. Herman Wirth / Marburg, Verfasser von 'Der Aufgang der Menschheit' und 'Was heisst deutsch'.* This writing appears to have been written on behalf of the Lübeck Police. It was followed by the Nazi philosopher Alfred Baeumler, known to be Heidegger's most reckless and perfidious opponent, with the booklet *Was bedeutet Herman Wirth für die Wissenschaft?* (1932). He was later criticized by geologist Prof. Dr. Fritz Wiegers, who openly accused him of amateurism, claiming that his writings were just a tissue of falsehoods without scientific evidence. Other critics followed later, as well as articles and works that testified to sympathy and interest. Far more important in the party, however, was the accusation that Wirth had still in 1932 had dealings with Freemasonry and had maintained friendly relations with some Jews. According to his friend, Dr. Joachim Weitzäcker, Herman Wirth after being removed from the *Ahnenerbe*, of which he was a founder, also lost his professorship at the University of Berlin because of his demand for freedom of research. He had to return to Marburg and could no longer teach, publish or speak in public. Finally, a veil of oblivion descended over him. But Wirth had not been completely forgotten: in 1945, the Americans confiscated his library and extensive documentation and subjected him to the same restrictions imposed on him during the last seven years of Hitler's regime. With no documentation and almost no steady income, he admirably began his life's work again, assisted by his wife Margarete Schmitt and a few friends. In 1960 *Um den Ursinn des Menschseins* appeared in Vienna. He founded the *Europaische Sammlung für religionsgeschichte* and in 1979, installed-at the age of 94! - in the ruins of an old castle in Lichtenberg near Kusel a museum intended to house his collections and the archives of all his writings. He spent the last years of his life almost completely paralyzed, working tirelessly, aided by a few loyal friends, and surviving on a few meager grants. He passed away in 1981. After his death his notes on one last major work mysteriously disappeared.

So much for framing the character, who would currently be called an "independent researcher." Let us now see (in necessarily superficial form) what his work means. In his paleo-epigraphic researches, he designed the historical reconstruction of a primordial religion, in a much more backward age of history. According to him, the Indo-Europeans were only representatives of a very late protohistoric period, so if history begins with writing, prehistory must be based on traditions. In this conjectural science, signs and symbols are very important, and one must interpret them. Incidentally, it must be said that academic scholars of prehistory (and not only those) are always suspicious of any subjective interpretation. They carry out excavations, discover fossils or artifacts, classify and place them arbitrarily usually according to the site of discovery.



From their findings one can infer that Homo sapiens lived in this or that period or define the pace of humanity's slow growth, which prosaically is called "civilization." Thus we speak of the Lower, Middle and Upper Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages, with their subdivisions, which are labeled as "civilizations," and the last of which are those of Hallstatt and La Tene. Remains of a fairly advanced civilization include the Altamira and Lascaux cave paintings, which, according to classical prehistory, are due to tribes of the Lower Neolithic (approximately between 35,000 and 10,000 B.C.). These finds were located in a geographical area far from northern Europe and could not have been of interest to Wirth or the other *Ahnenerbe* scholars, who were looking instead for older traces of Indo-European civilization. But we know full well that writing, at least as we understand it, is relatively recent. Instead, academic studies stumble over the problems posed by the presence of megaliths. One acknowledges their existence (it would take too much cheek to deny it), however, one fails to give them a definite interpretation. Thus academics tend to distrust those who, like Wirth, try to find an explanation. And in cases of heretical questions such as the existence of Atlantis, they prefer to refrain or advance hypotheses of nonexistence, considering those of non-palmed, laurel-crowned researchers as pure fantasies. In general, it can be said that classical scholars tend to ignore or underestimate the work of German linguist Franz Bopp *Vergleichende Grammatik des Sanskrit, Zend griechischen, Lateinischen, Lithauischen, Gotischen und Deutschen*, which dates back to the distant years 1833-1852. The language question of the Indo-Europeans had quickly shifted to the problem of the area of residence of the Indo-European peoples who had spoken that language, with no basis for agreement among scholars as to the point of departure and date of distribution. The greatest confusion reigns in this area. One thing is certain: wherever the Indo-Europeans had settled, they had subdued the populations already living in that area (e.g., the Dravidians in India). Everywhere in Europe as in Asia, they represented the two dominant castes, the clergy and the warriors.

Herman Wirth was not opposed to Odinistic mythology, although he was more or less in line with Bachofen (*Das Mutterrecht*), the matriarchy theorist, and believed that there had been a very ancient matriarchal religion, the key to which was the concept of Mother Earth. Also according to classical prehistory in Atlantic Europe in the third millennium B.C. there was a "megalithic" religion, with the worship of a fertility goddess, who once presided over funeral rites. But it is equally certain that since the Neolithic (perhaps even the Paleolithic) there was a cult of the female deity: this is confirmed by numerous images, such as the "Venuses" of Savignano (Italy), Gagarino (USSR) and Willendorff (Austria), or the female heads of Dolni Vestonice (Moravia), Berekhat Ram (Golan) and Tan Tan (Morocco). While the former have an approximate age of 25-30,000 years, the latter two would be 230,000 and about 300,000-500,000 years old, respectively.

Wirth's studies focused mainly in northern Europe, as evidenced by his travels in 1935-36, investigating from the tenth millennium B.C., especially the Mesolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age, until the forced Christianization of northern Europe. According to the Primordial Tradition then the climate in the northern areas was much milder, and Greenland and Spitzbergen were green and fertile lands. In his research of what the prehistoric cult of Mother Earth could confirm, Wirth emphasized the enormous importance of pre-Indo-European civilization for cultural and religious life in Europe. However, the Indo-European conquerors, who had raided the entire ancient world from the Atlantic to the Near and Far East, had found other populations already settled, with different traditions.

At this point I feel it is only right to add that I agree that this researcher's work can be accused of a certain amateurism, but is this not the common risk of all those who venture into the folds of our ancient past?

How many mystifiers are there who juggle as skillful sellers of themselves with authoritative as well as unobtainable informants, obtaining science and the keys to ancient secret knowledge from Tibetan pseudo-monks, implausible spirit guides, winged savior angels and unlikely green extraterrestrials with long antennae? Unfortunately, I do not have these high connections and have to make do with deductive methods and painful research. It does not seem to me that Wirth is a charlatan, but I do not demand that my opinion be accepted supinely; I am no one's teacher and therefore no one is obliged *to iurare in verba magistri*. Let everyone form their own opinion, I just want to try to lay out some facts.

Wirth became involved in the '*Ura Linda Kronik affair*. Was it really a forgery, a purely literary fantasy like Ossian's songs? Is it instead a late compilation of an oral tradition, like the Kalewala? It is fair to ask the question. Everyone will find the answer they want to find. Let us not forget, by the way, that as long as he was a person grateful to the *Ahnenerbe*, he was considered a great scholar in the field of prehistory, and that after his disgrace he was denied the right even to lecture and speak in public. In his time, even the Nazi philosopher Alfred Rosenberg (later hanged at Nuremberg), who had also banned poor Wirth because of the *Ura Linda Kronik* affair, had considered, in his ponderous book *The Myth of the 20th Century* (1930), the existence of a Hyperborean Atlantis in the Far North. Hypothesis rejected with academic fury by the Paludate professors. But if the existence of a flourishing polar continent might have seemed absurd, a northern cultural radiating center in the areas surrounding the pole would not. Apart from racial considerations about the Aryan peoples who would have descended from the north, which do not enter into the present research work, we take up here the interpretation of Bailly, quoted earlier, almost a forerunner, when he thought of a people from the north who came down to conquer and civilize India.

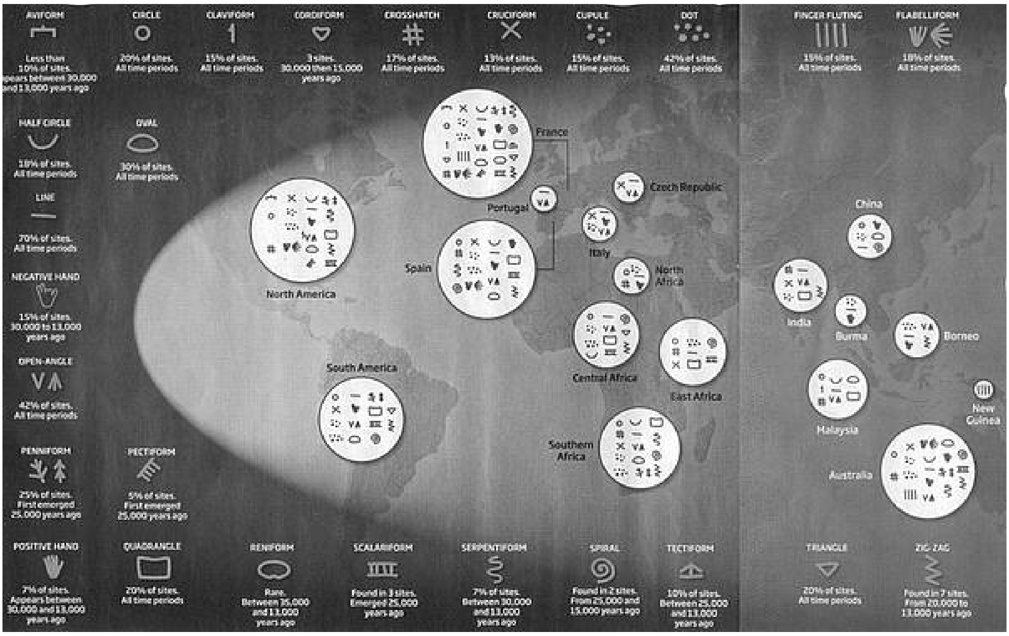
But let us return to Wirth. On the basis of his paleontological research, using linguistics, , folklore, and above all with a powerful dose of intuition, the "irregular" scholar, an independent researcher *ante litteram,* had conceived the idea of an Arctic continent populated anciently by a race having a monotheistic religious idea linked to a solar cult. Evidently his approach to the artifacts he analyzed was very different from the academic one. He thus claimed to reconstruct also the religious attitude of this ancient people, linked to the solar path throughout the year. Herman Wirth considered the following facts:

- from geology it was known that Greenland extended to join Europe and America, and deposits of hard coal had been found there, evidence of ancient tropical-type vegetation;

- ancient traditions of Iranians, Hindus, Germans, and Celts reported a catastrophic event caused by a wave of intense cold, which forced them to migrate south;

- from research on sanguisierology, then in its infancy, had derived a different distribution of blood types among different populations;

- had traced, in his research, a series of symbols, which fixed the different points of the sun's course at the zodiac signs, following the well-known phenomenon of precession.


AVIFORM
Less than 10% of sites. Appears between 30,000 and 13,000 years ago
CIRCLE
20% of sites. All time periods
CLAVIFORM
15% of sites. All time periods
CORDIFORM
3 sites. 30,000 then 15,000 years ago
CROSSHATCH
17% of sites. All time periods
CRUCIFORM
13% of sites. All time periods
CUPULE
15% of sites. All time periods
DOT
42% of sites. All time periods
FINGER FLUTING
15% of sites. All time periods
FLABELLIFORM
18% of sites. All time periods
HALF CIRCLE
18% of sites. All time periods
OVAL
30% of sites. All time periods
LINE
70% of sites. All time periods
NEGATIVE HAND
15% of sites. 30,000 to 13,000 years ago
OPEN-ANGLE
42% of sites. All time periods
PENNIFORM
25% of sites. First emerged 25,000 years ago
PECTIFORM
5% of sites. First emerged 25,000 years ago
POSITIVE HAND
7% of sites. Appears between 30,000 and 13,000 years ago
QUADRANGLE
20% of sites. All time periods
RENIFORM
Rare. Between 35,000 and 13,000 years ago
SCALARIFORM
Found in 3 sites. Emerged 25,000 years ago
SERPENTIFORM
7% of sites. Between 30,000 and 13,000 years ago
SPIRAL
Found in 2 sites. From 25,000 and 15,000 years ago
TECTIFORM
10% of sites. Between 25,000 and 13,000 years ago
TRIANGLE
20% of sites. All time periods
ZIG-ZAG
Found in 7 sites. From 20,000 to 13,000 years ago
North America
France
Portugal
Spain
Czech Republic
Italy
North Africa
South America
Central Africa
East Africa
Southern Africa
China
India
Burma
Borneo
Malaysia
New Guinea
Australia

This series particularly interested him and he called it the "sacred series," believing that it began with the winter solstice and that a primordial linear alphabet corresponded to it. Since every 2160 years there is a change to a different zodiac sign, this change had to correspond to a different arrangement of symbols. He thus believed that he had found traces of the passage of the primeval people of the north in the different places where he had found such symbols. The oldest would have been found in the American Arctic area, dating back to the time of the Lion constellation. Around 10000 B.C., the disappearance of these symbols is noted, coinciding with the sinking of Atlantis. Without insisting on this author, whose texts can still be found for those who may be interested in learning more about him, I would only remind you that recently a scholar, Genevieve von Petzinger, with a Master's degree in Anthropology from the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, has initiated almost unprecedented research on the ancient geometric signs, which appear in prehistoric cave paintings. But this young scholar has already deserved her own chapter.

FELICE VINCI, A BRILLIANT RESEARCHER

Love of Jupiter, generous Achilles,
Do you want that of the sovereign archer Apollo
Do you reveal the disdain? I obey you.

- Homer

Some time ago I learned from a television broadcast about the theory of an Italian researcher, Felice Vinci, who placed Homeric events in the Baltic Sea and surrounding areas. Vinci is a nuclear engineer, so it would not have been at all easy to accuse him of being a vague inconclusive dreamer. I confess that the first feeling was that this was a bizarre idea, badly accustomed, like so many, to imagining Homeric heroes as individuals who lived, dressed, and fought like the Greeks of classical antiquity. Besides, how to move Troy to the Baltic, after Heinrich Schliemann's discoveries on the shores of the Hellespont? I was therefore already starting out challenged towards this new proposed historical interpretation. However, besides having the defect of always being skeptical, I also have the defect of being deeply curious, so I decided to read Vinci's book (*Homer in the Baltic*). After a few dozen pages my interest grew immense and I devoured the book with deep interest. These were not mere clues, but analytically documented evidence.

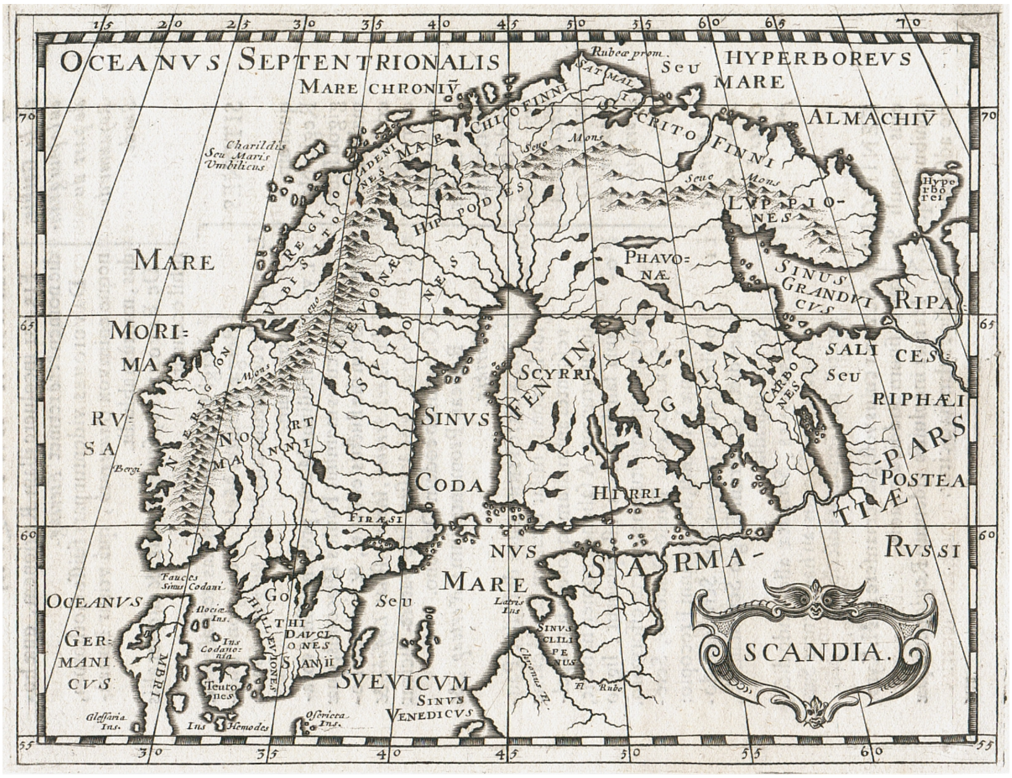
I am well aware that for the academic world, always cautious and conservative in the case of innovations, as well as too often afraid to expose itself out of pusillanimity, what is proposed in this book will be considered, if with the utmost benevolence, as an interesting hypothesis, a reasonable theory, a plausible thesis, to be kept in a drawer locked with a double lock; but for me it was a fundamental discovery, a milestone in the interpretation of mythological history. I have read and reread the book, which brings a whole series of clarifications on the contents of the Homeric poems, showing a more than solid culture on the subject.

But what is the corroborating evidence that Homeric events would have originated in northern Europe and from there transplanted to the Mediterranean? I will mention some, recommending, for those who want more serious and detailed insights, to read this very valuable book.

The climate, as described in both the Iliad and the Odyssey, is by no means the warm and sunny climate of the Mediterranean, but the gray and misty climate of the north, as is the clothing of the protagonists, who are covered in warm and heavy cloaks, while always there is a fire burning in the various dwellings.

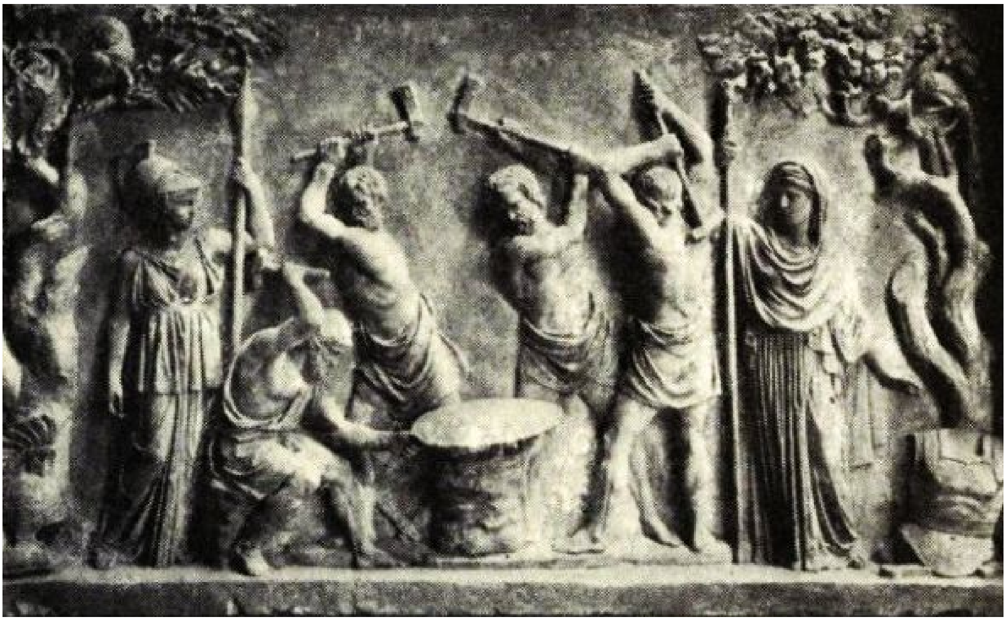
The geographical description of places does not fit that of Greece, while it finds a continuous series of correspondences with that of the Baltic. From the Peloponnese, literally "Island of Pelops," which is instead a peninsula, while it finds its original counterpart in the island of Sjælland, from present-day Ithaca, which does not fit Homer's description of it, which instead fits the island of Lyö, a whole series of Homeric descriptions absolutely identifiable with the geography of the Baltic and Scandinavia.

From the list of ships we deduce the areas of origin of the different peoples who constituted the Achaean expedition, arranged in the Baltic in a counterclockwise direction, with an arrangement similar to that of the regions of classical Greece, but much more adherent for the logic of the movements described in the Homeric poems. While one of the problems always faced by all scholars of the Iliad and Odyssey was to reconcile the descriptions of the places with their reality in the Mediterranean, Felice Vinci, with careful study and ingenious insights, traced the places of the Trojan War and Odysseus' landings, comparing them one by one.


OCEANVS SEPTENTRIONALIS
MARE CHRONIV
HYPERBOREVS
Seu
MARE
ALMACHIV
SCANDIA.
MARE
MORIMARVSA
OCEANVS
GERMANICVS
SINVS CODANVS
MARE SVEVICVM
SINVS VENEDICVS
SARMATIÆ
RVSSI
POSTEA
PARS
RIPHÆI
SALI CES
RIPA
FENNIGIA
SCYRRI
HIRRI
PHAVONÆ
LVPPIONES
SINVS GRANDVICVS
CHIOFINNI
SCRITOFINNI
HIPPOPODES
Bergi
Teutones
Glessaria Ins.
Oserieta Ins.
Latris Ins.
Charildis Seu Maris Umbilicus
Rubeæ prom.

Not only that, he also noted an incredible coincidence (who believes in coincidences?) of current toponymy with the names of ancient peoples and the regions they inhabited in the north. Modestly he stated that this coincidence is not probative, but only an additional support for his thesis. For my part, I want to add, contrary to his modesty, that one coincidence is a fluke, two coincidences would be a fluke, while dozens of coincidences in themselves become clear evidence.

The author also clarifies the concept that for Homer the Ocean was not the sea, but a river flowing *into* the sea. That is, what we know today as the Gulf Stream. And with Odysseus following the Gulf Stream we trace the Homeric Ethiopians, the "extremes of men," who lived beyond Egypt, also at the far end of the known world. Etymologically, the name of the Ethiopians has traditionally been related to the Greek etymon "aintein" (to burn), thinking of men with sunburnt skin. However, one could think of a different sense, "men of flame," referring to a fire cult or the forge of Hephaestus. This hypothesis is not as peregrine as it might seem at first glance, especially when compared with all the other evidence adduced.



Hence a whole reconstruction of the Bronze Age and the movements of the peoples of northern Europe to the Mediterranean, where they named their new settlements after their home areas, bringing with them their own myths, sagas, gods and heroes. Thus the area of origin of the Indo-Europeans is identified with the lands of the far north, when the climate was quite different from what it is today.

Having in mind the myths that preceded the epic of the Trojan War, it would indeed seem that the myth of the Argonauts, who had sailed all the way to the Chronian Sea (before this name changed to the Adriatic), i.e., today's North Atlantic, might have been reminiscent of an ancient circumnavigation of Scandinavia, starting from the Gulf of Bothnia, crossing the lakes and waterways of Lapland to the White Sea, then descending skirting Scandinavia until re-entering the Baltic.

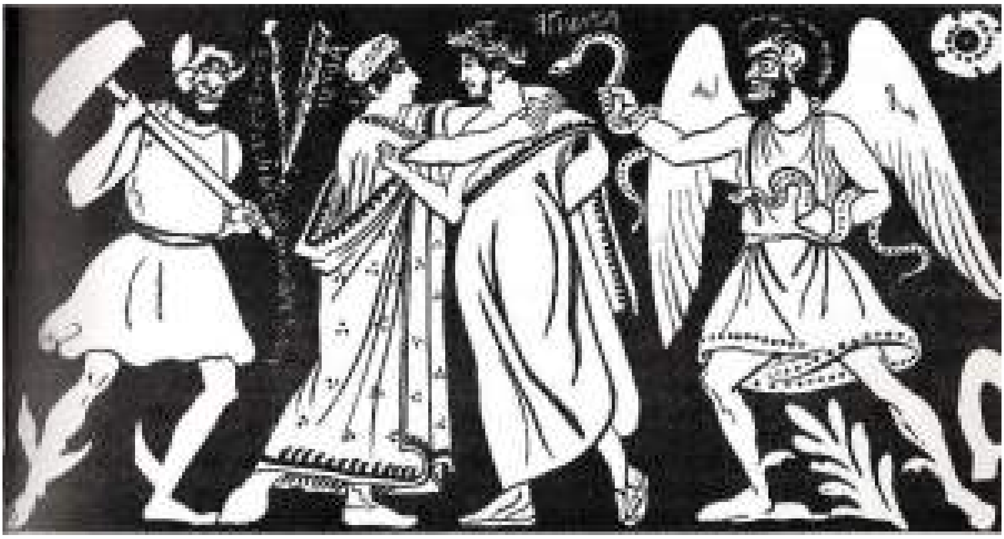
Then there is the reference, made by both Homer and Apollonius, to clear nights in subpolar areas, as well as that to the Cimmerian people, on whom the sun never shines.

But these are only hints compared to the amount of clues contributed by the author, such as similarities with Vedic mythology and rituals, linguistic affinities, coincidence of place names, similarities between Mycenaean and Norse archaeological finds, and so on. Then there is the description of the great and long battle that lasts continuously for two days and one night, the clear night mentioned just above.

Plutarch is also recalled, who in his *De facie quæ in orbe lunæ apparet* places the island of Ogygia five days' sail from Britain. Starting from this indication, Vinci reconstructs the Odyssey's voyage in concordance with the geographical indications of the Iliad.

About 2000 years B.C. ended the *climatic optimum*, which had begun approximately 4-5000 years earlier and had favored the northern European regions during that time. Then the various Indo-European populations swarmed southward, arriving in India, Persia, the Caucasus, Europe, and Central Asia. Homer had also placed in the far north, where a branch of the Gulf Stream reaches, Hades, the land of the dead, practically already within the White Sea.

A mention, too, of Charon, the ferryman of the dead described with a hirsute red beard (very Viking-like), whom the Romans had inherited from the Greek Caron and who is similar to the Etruscan Charun, the keeper of the underworld; in Finnish kharu means "bear," perhaps some ancient reminiscence, like Berserkr?



The Odyssey also mentions Charybdis, with its monstrous whirlpool, which reminds our engineer of the whipping of the ocean of milk we found earlier in the *Mahābhārata*.

As is well known, another name for Troy was Ilion, presumably from the name of Ilo, fourth king of Troy, who would rebuild it. An etymology from ile (multitude, from eileo=congregation) seems more convincing. But we find the name Wilusa (whence Ilion) in some Hittite sources. So an overlap of the Wilusa of Asia Minor on the Baltic Troy is evident. And before the construction of Troy there had been Teucer, son of the river Scamander, who ruled the region (Troad); he had taken in Dardanus, son of Zeus, who married his daughter, having among others a son named Troos, after whom the city would be named.

I have just outlined some summary points of Eng. Vinci's research, which is so interesting and varied that it deserves meticulous and specialized study.

At this point I think it is appropriate to note how there is a remarkable parallelism between the Iliad and the Epic of Gilgamesh, a correspondence noted (*In Homer's Workshop*, Part IV, Ch. VIII) by the recently deceased Vincenzo di Benedetto, professor of Greek literature at the University of Pisa and distinguished philologist. For example, one brings in the dialogue between Achilles and the shadow of Patroclus, similar to that of Gilgamesh with Enkidu returned from the underworld; or the clash between Aphrodite and Diomedes, Achilles' friend, comparable to that between the goddess Ishtar and Enkidu. Both poems highlight the great friendship that binds the hero to his friend, the divine decision to have the latter die, and the importance of the funeral ceremony organized by the hero himself. The grieving hero is compared in both poems to a lioness who has lost her cubs, and many other situations in the two poems absolutely overlap. Can we perhaps speak of cultural exchanges between the Greek and Mesopotamian worlds? One would not think so, since the Gilgamesh flood narrative dates from the Ninevite period, around 650 B.C., in which the flood hero has an Akkadian name, Atramkhasis (=Great Sage), but is traced to the Ziusudra (=Long Life) of the oldest Sumerian versions (1700 B.C.). The biblical account of Noah, a version clearly derived from the Mesopotamian version, dates from the 8th century B.C.

Therefore, it does not seem illogical to speculate that the two poems have a possible origin in stories that were passed down orally and then differentiated in different geographic areas of spread of peoples having common beliefs and myths.

I should add, to Eng. Vinci's greatest boast, that he also carried out *on-site* investigations, moving around the Baltic Sea and thus tracing not only the location of the settlement of Homeric Troy but also the places of Odysseus' wanderings. Look for his book and enjoy reading it. I highly recommend it.

THE RUINS OF ATLANTIS

Knowing how to relive the past with pleasure

Is to live twice.

- *Martial*

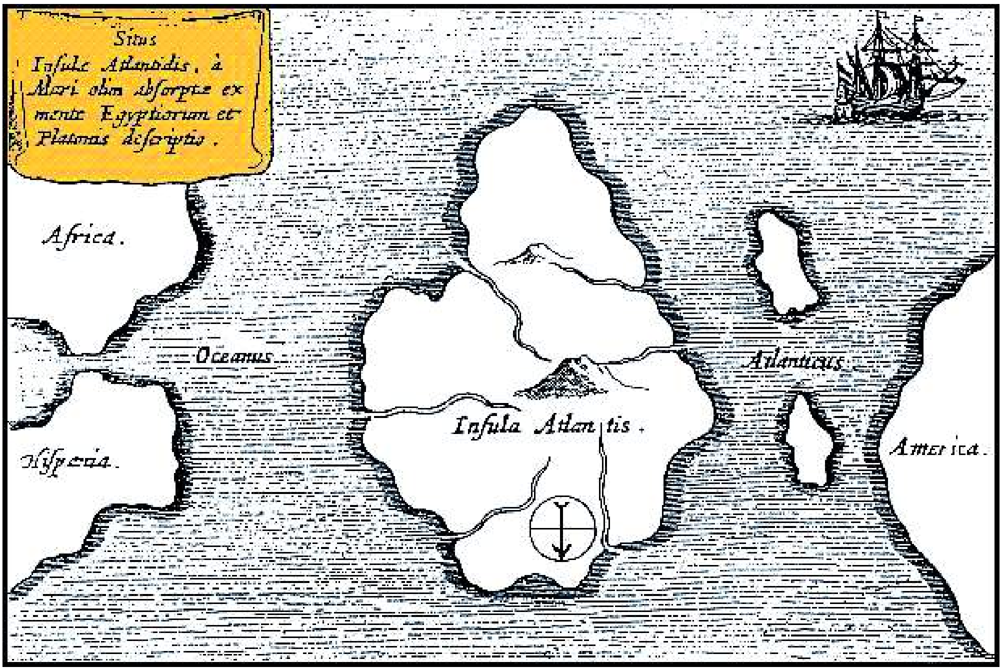
I must admit, I am genuinely amazed. Marco Bulloni, another nuclear engineer, has done research, let's say, out of the chorus. This comforts me, because I am firmly of the opinion that science, true science, is a category of the spirit, the willingness to seek, to experiment, to work out hypotheses to prove, the ability to rise above the dreariness of obviousness and officialdom.

I have always held the belief that very often it was dogged researchers who achieved amazing results, precisely because they were moved by the yearning to go beyond the obstacle. My esteem for the meritorious category of nuclear engineers is growing by leaps and bounds, despite Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Since Plato wrote the Timaeus and the Cirtia, the two dialogues in which this fabled island first appears, hundreds of interpretations have been expressed and thousands of books written, both for and against the existence of Atlantis. It has been sought everywhere, from the depths of the Atlantic Ocean to the island of Santorini, from Sweden to the Bimini, from the Caribbean to Antarctica, from the Sargasso Sea to Bolivia, from Andalusia to Sardinia, while skeptics have always argued to the sword that it was a utopian creation of Plato against the corruption prevailing in Athens at the time.

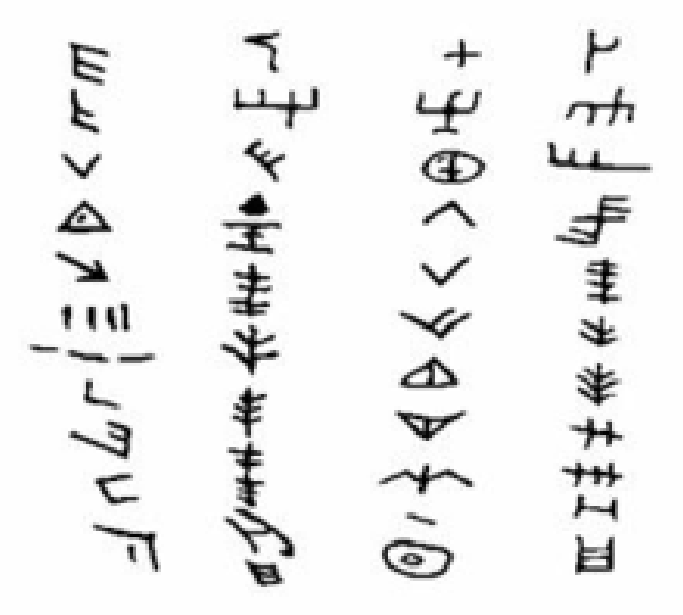
Como known, Plato reported what would be revealed to Solon by Sonchis, an Egyptian priest of Sais. Also given was a detailed description of Atlantis, an island on which stood harbors, royal palaces, majestic temples, with the sanctuary of Poseidon and Cleitus at its center, clad in silver, gold, ivory and orichalc. All this while also giving their relative measurements. The positions were always irreducible: those who wanted to believe in the existence of Atlantis, a continent that disappeared in the ocean's billows, could not conceive that there were skeptics who denied its existence to the bitter end, and vice versa. Preconception dominated on both sides: each believed or disbelieved a priori, without fully analyzing the problem and seeking its solution. Thus those who denied, refused *tout court to* carry out even the slightest research that was not supported by the prior stance, while those who wanted to believe that it was not just a myth strove to prove what, at times, appeared absurd and indemonstrable. We believe that the main difficulty arose from the interpretation of Plato's writings. There was always a tendency to give a geographical location constrained to the description of places located in or connected to the Mediterranean, such as the well-known Pillars of Hercules, which almost always coincided with the Strait of Gibraltar, when not with the Strait of Sicily. Although some even identified them with geographical accidents of Antarctica (Fabio Barbiero , *A Civilization Under Ice*) even with careful and thorough research. When I became aware of Eng. Marco Bulloni's book (*I discovered the real Atlantis*) I immediately thought, "Another undoubtedly interesting theory, but theory...."

The book was a real discovery because it was really placed on a solid foundation, with methodology truly worthy of a nuclear engineer, neat and clear. As a practical and decisive person, our well-deserving author took care to go to the site to see, check and verify his hypotheses, which were amply confirmed by his *site* visit, made moreover with his daughter Alice, who I thought was admirable, for her courage to participate in what was clearly a journey of exploration and for the beautiful preface to the book, truly worthy of such a father. The study was done with method and extreme seriousness, and the research that Bulloni did on Atlantis must have been long and exhausting, combing through old books and ancient maps, analyzing often contradictory information on the web, comparing often overlooked data. The author had found a strange resemblance between Solovetski Island and the image of Atlantis exhibited by Athanasius Kircher in his work *Mundus subterraneus, quo universae denique naturae divitiae*, published in 1665. It is generally argued that this is a purely fictional map, even considering that the lost continent is placed in the middle of the Atlantic, an impossible place for known geological reasons.


Situs
Inſulæ Atlantidis, à Mari olim abſorptæ ex mente Egyptiorum et Platonis deſcriptio.
Africa.
Oceanus
Hiſpania.
Inſula Atlantis.
Atlanticus
America.

Yet the resemblance is astonishing. For my part, I would like to add that I know that Kircher had been received in 1640 into the V.E.O.S.P.S. (*Venerabilis Equester Ordo Sacri Principatus Sancti Sepulchri*), which claimed to trace its origins back to the Sumerians. The name Sumerians is the name given to the ancient inhabitants of Mesopotamia by the Akkadians, while they called themselves "Sag-giga," or "the black-headed people," and called their country "Ki-en-gi," "place of civilized lords." They had settled in that region around 4000 B.C., perhaps coming down from the Zagros Mountains or perhaps arriving from the sea. They were already using war chariots, drawn by horses or onagers, still with full wheels. Their cuneiform writing seems to be one of the oldest. The earliest cuneiform characters emerge from a primitive form of pictographic proto-writing dating back to the fourth millennium. The oldest forms of Mesopotamian writing date from between the XXXV and XXXII centuries B.C.

The earliest documents, which have come down to us, written unequivocally in the Sumerian language date from the XXXI century, found in Jemdet Nasr, Iraq. In the interest of fairness, however, I must add that there is an older find, the tablet of Dispilio, found in Greece in the late 20th century and dating from about 5300 B.C., with an inscription in an unknown language as yet undeciphered, the text of which I reproduce below. Writing or proto-writing?



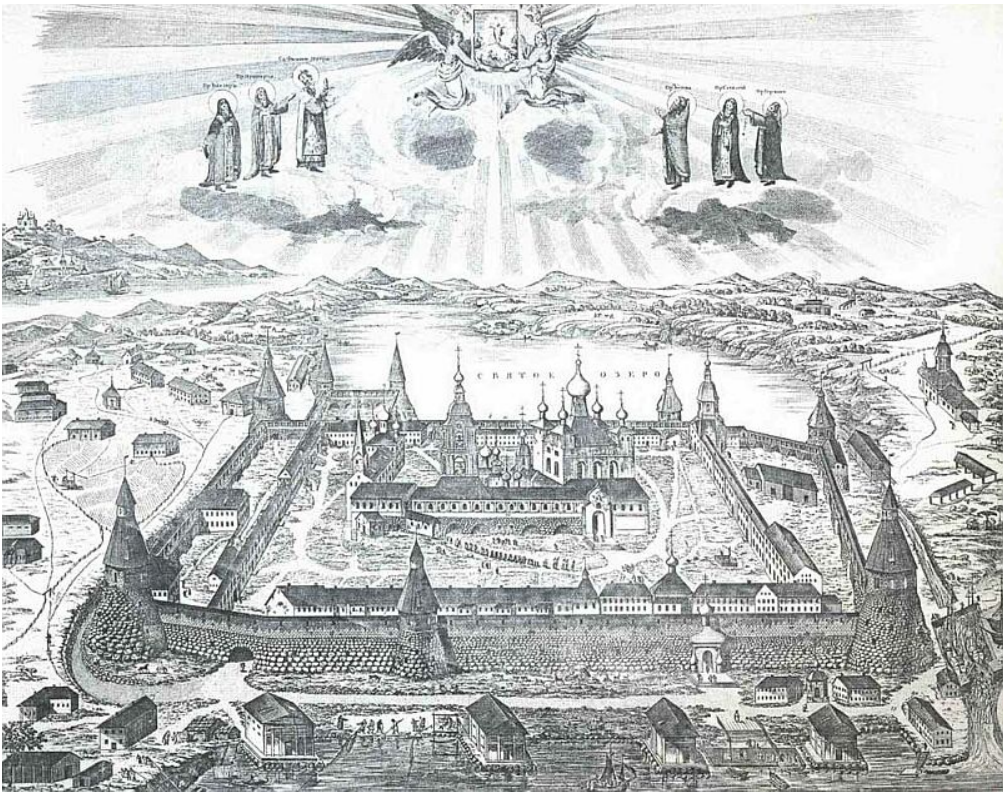
In contrast, in Japan, as mentioned earlier, some 3,000 petroglyphs, some with inscriptions, have been found, preserved in the Governmental Museum of Okinawa Prefecture, dated between 12,000 and 6500 B.C. and 30 percent decipherable with Sumerian cuneiform or proto-sumerian characters. The legendary history of the island tells of a catastrophe that occurred about 14,000 years ago.

But back to our author. He located the capital of Atlantis in the Gulf of Onega, White Sea, on the Great Solovetsky Island, part of the Solovki archipelago. The idea initially seemed abstruse, whimsical, almost delusional. However.

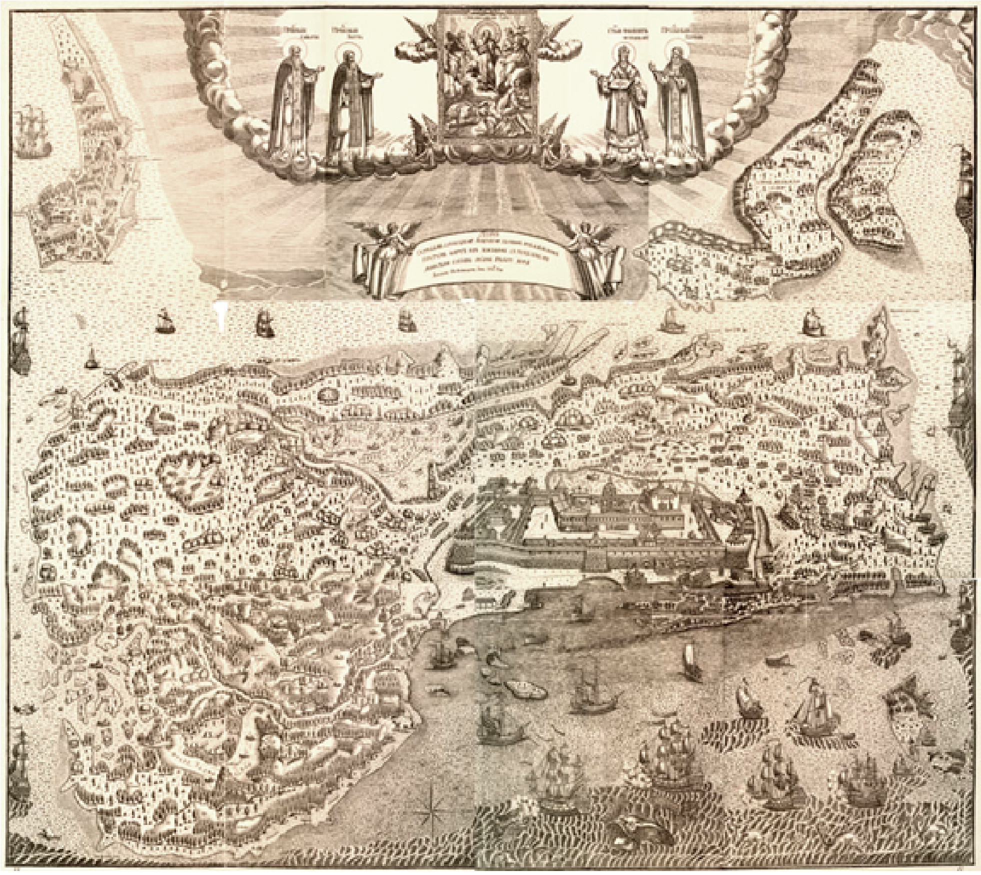
The hypothesis of a civilization in the subpolar zone had already been advanced by others, without, however, an archaeological trace, only myths, legends, ancient traditions that have come down to us stumped or expressed in apparently non-rational terms. I do not want to exempt my few and extremely patient readers (they have so far endured a bombardment of data, which perhaps they would have ardently wished to avoid) from reading the aforementioned book by Eng. Bulloni, so I will merely list very briefly the points, in my opinion, most salient in his research. The oldest human settlements in the White Sea area can be dated to around 6000 B.C. On the island and in nearby areas he found numerous petroglyphs dating to the mid-4th millennium B.C., depicting hunting scenes, ships and boats, whale fishing, skiers, swans and other animals, solar symbols, etc. All evidence of stable settlements of seafaring peoples. Perhaps they had arrived from the south, thanks to the navigation routes offered by the northern Dvina and Onega rivers. It has been speculated that they were Indo-Europeans belonging to the Kurgan civilization, characterized by mound burials, the use of the horse, the battle axe, and cordate pottery, perhaps the same ones who originated the Tocari of Uighur country, where the famous Tarim mummies were found, evidently of Indo-European individuals.

Around 1500 B.C. the petroglyphs were submerged by the waters, thus creating a cultural rift with later populations. Many "sacred stones" of prehistoric origin, predating the arrival of the Lapps, are found in the same areas. Sometimes they appear to represent constellations, or are large boulders resting on smaller stones. Hundreds of them can be found. As archaeological finds of various kinds: scrapers, arrowheads, and so on. Until the second half of the second millennium B.C.E., then nothing. Every sign of human presence disappears and this White Sea Culture, belonging to a people of navigators, remains a mystery. It is known from some findings that they were in contact with peoples up to 4,000 kilometers away, with whom they traded. The islands also appear to have been a burial site. After a few hundred years other different peoples survived, who only sporadically visited the Solovki Islands.

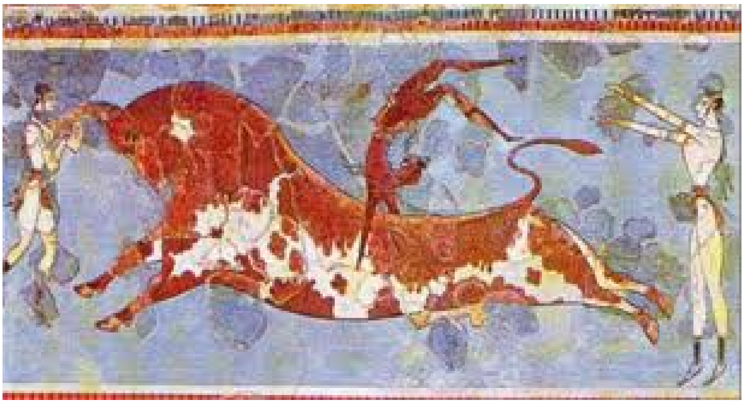
Until 1440 e.v., when three Orthodox monks rediscovered them, starting the construction of the churches and the monastery, which became particularly powerful in a short time. Bolts asks some crucial questions: Why so many churches leaning against each other? Why a huge refectory of over 250 m2? Why a very large stone church on a semi-deserted island? Why such a remarkable defensive system with massive walls, deep moats and gigantic towers? Why were the bases of the buildings all made of giant granite boulders? And how could a few religious people build such impressive works in such a short time? The answer? The monks found cyclopean ruins half-covered by mud and earth, unearthed them and built their buildings on top of them, respecting the ancient plan.



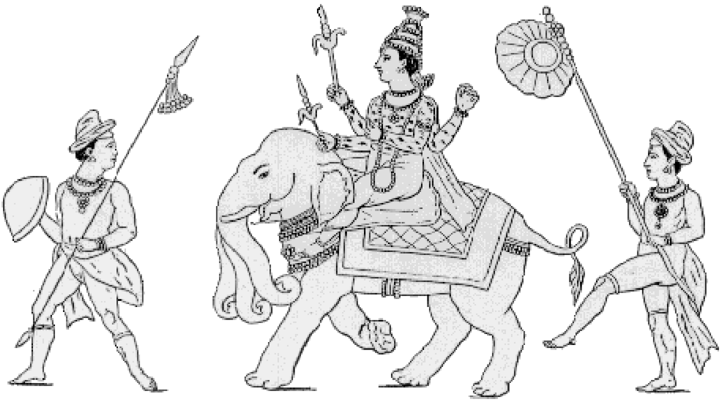
Plato's account of Atlantis was very accurate, speaking separately of the capital and the great plain, while the vast majority of researchers have always thought of a great continent within which the capital of the empire was located. Instead, it should be considered a plain set in front of the island on which the city lay. Now the description of the plain fits Karelia perfectly, both in terms of its measurements and the channeling described by the philosopher, coinciding with the present rivers and canals that run through it, while the present monastic complex located on Solovetsky Island has the exact same dimensions as the palaces and temples of the capital of Platonic Atlantis. The remains of the sea and land walls described by Plato to defend the city also appear clearly on the island, highlighting a winding labyrinth that would have prevented access to any enemies. And there are several stone labyrinths on the islands, which appear to be nothing more than stone maps of the main island. The orography and hydrography of the Greater Solovetsky also agree with Plato's description. Also, as is known, imposing temples and palaces were described, and the dimensions of the foundations of the monastic complex coincide with those provided by the Greek philosopher. Not only that, the photographs of Eng.Bulloni, published in his book, also support in great detail the thesis of a very ancient human settlement. And the mythical Pillars of Hercules, beyond which was Atlantis, where does the Italian researcher find them? One has always thought mostly of the Strait of Gibraltar, when not the Strait of Sicily, narrowing the field of research to the Mediterranean Sea. However, this, it must be acknowledged, is a very narrow view.



From a whole series of clues he deduces that they were to be found on the Kola Peninsula: the Khibiny and Lovozero Tundra mountains, two rounded reliefs placed in the center of a hilly area, located, Plato *dixit*, "at the end of the world...at the frontiers of darkness...there where the gods have their retreat..." as Bulloni rightly recalls. And recall also the function of Atlas in Greek mythology, where the giant had the task of supporting the sky and was temporarily replaced by Hercules. This is not the only myth recalled in the book, where it is also mentioned that of Theseus, who, after some initial clashes with Hercules, became his ally: two distinct but related peoples, one seafaring, the other warrior, who would later form an alliance, associating themselves. Peoples of whom one had descended from the far north, the other had settled in Greece, and after some initial skirmishes had recognized each other as kindred. To this alliance should be ascribed the victory over the Mycenaeans, heirs of Atlantis, who had invaded Crete around 1450 B.C., displacing Minoan power. An event symbolized perhaps by the death of the Minotaur.

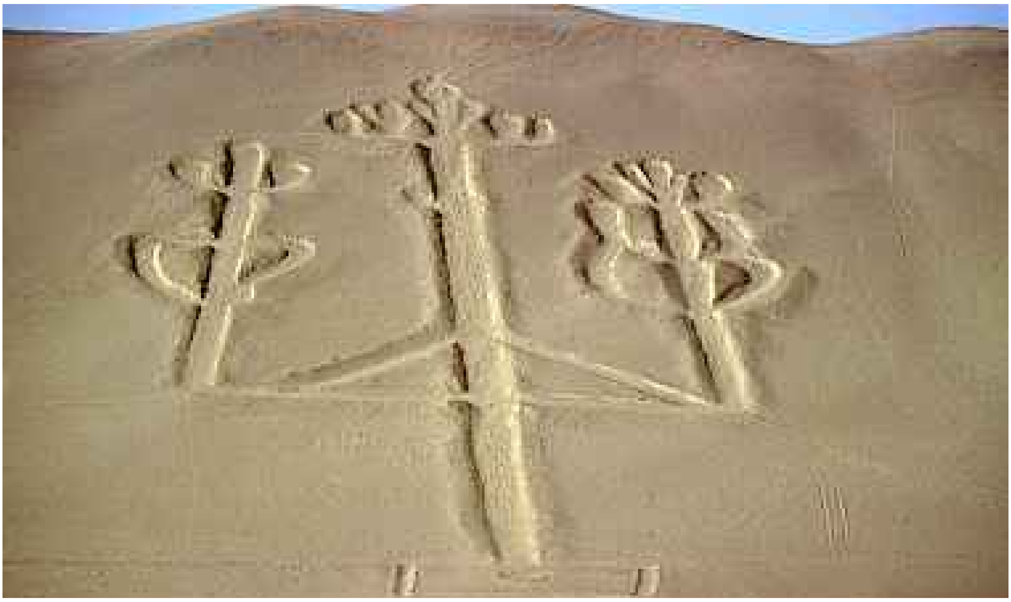


About a century later several peoples had descended from northern Europe to invade Greece and Asia Minor. And Zeus, god of storms, thrower of thunderbolts and gatherer of clouds, bears some resemblance to the Urrite Teshub, the Hittite Tarhun, the Norse Thor, the Hindu Indra; he was brother to Poseidon Enosigeus, god of the sea, shaker of the earth, creator of earthquakes. His best-known symbol is the trident, as Zeus's are thunderbolts (equivalent to Thor's hammer, Teshub's axe, and Indra's thunderbolt, lover of women, nobly wrathful and used to get drunk before battles.

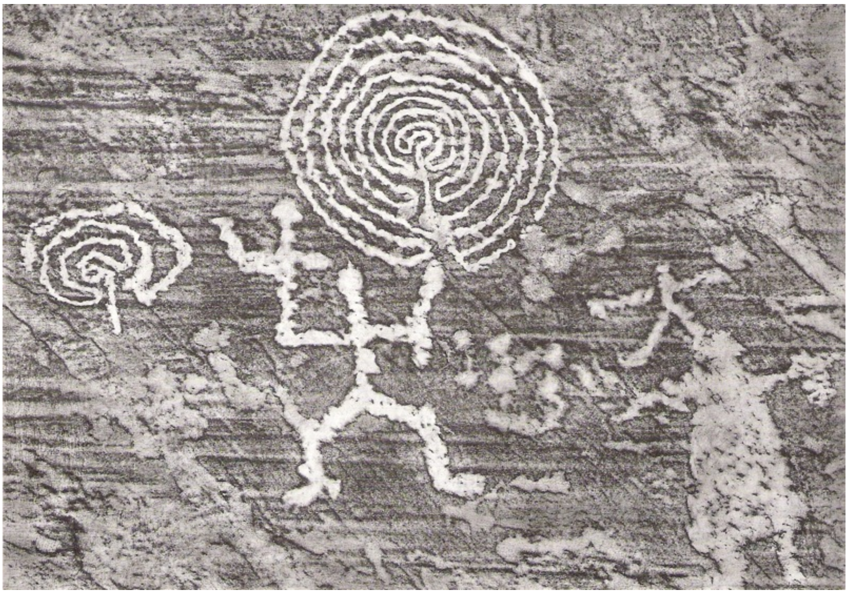


However, the trident is also the weapon of Teshub and Shiva the destroyer (whose sacred animal was the bull, as with Zeus). But Thor's double hammer (originally perhaps a stone axe) is assimilated to Teshub's axe, as well as to the Cretan labrys, linked as known to the symbolism of lightning. And the term labrys is linked to the name of Abaris, who, according to Diodorus Siculus, had come from Hyperborea to Greece to renew the bonds that united the two peoples and had given Pythagoras a golden arrow that carried him everywhere (perhaps a compass?), being reciprocated with a golden thigh (perhaps the golden ratio?).

However, the surprises never end....



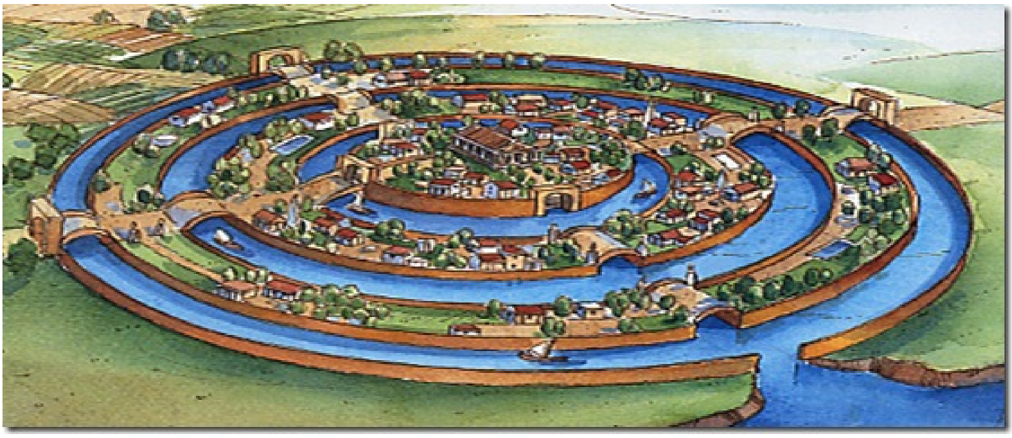
In Peru, in the archaeological reserve of Paracas, a trident 120 meters in diameter can be seen carved into the side of a hill. I have no answers to any questions about its origin and meaning. Let us return for a moment to Orion. A constellation just opposite that of Taurus, Orion seems to closely resemble the storm god of the Indo-Europeans. Moreover, the body of the constellation Orion seems to consist of stars forming two trapezoids, joined by the three stars of Orion's Belt (yep, always that one, always returns and we don't know why...). However, the perimeter bounded by the two trapezoids conforms a bipenal axe. But then the two-pronged axe would be a representation of Orion, recalling that the two-pronged axe in Rome appeared in the republican fasces. Instead, the head of Taurus consists of seven stars, the Hyades (the rainy ones), which form in the sky a kind of V. In Greek mythology they were daughters of Atlas and Etra (Greek for "clear sky"). Atlas was also father of the Pleiades (the doves or those that facilitate navigation).



Labrys also enters into the composition of the term labyrinth, which would mean, according to some scholars, "the place of the two-pronged axe" According to others, however, its meaning would be that of "the boundary of the axe's expansion," interpreting it through the luvia language, akin to Hittite and related to Lycian, Carius, Lydian, and perhaps even Etruscan. The labyrinth also exists in American Indian tradition...and reappears in Europe in the floor of Gothic cathedrals as a symbol of a path of pilgrimage and initiation. A very interesting example of an ancient labyrinth can also be seen in Italy at National Park of Rock Engravings at Capo di Ponte in Valcamonica (Brescia) .

Generally, following Greek myth, we tend to place it in Crete, where it was allegedly erected by King Minos, commissioning the distinguished architect Daedalus to build it. Daedalus was then imprisoned there with his son Icarus, and to escape he built two pairs of wings out of feathers and wax, but during flight Icarus came too close to the sun, the wax melted, and he died falling into the sea. After ups and downs, Daedalus would colonize Sardinia with Iolaus, who being Hercules' grandson brought the latter's children there. Thus Sardinia was populated. In short, the lineage of Hercules (who had been Atlas' substitute for supporting the heavens and who can also be likened to Orion) originated the Sardinians as he had originated the Spartans. Then in the labyrinth would be locked up the Minotaur, a monster born of the bestial union of Queen Pasiphae with a sacred bull, a gift from Poseidon, to which he was to be sacrificed. The Minotaur demanded a tribute of seven maidens and seven maidens of Athens every year, until Theseus (=the discoverer of hidden things), hero of the Ionians, thanks to the help of Ariadne (=the purest), daughter of Minos, killed him. Theseus was only able to get out of the labyrinth because of the famous thread that Ariadne had given him and let flow along the way. Once the Minotaur was killed, Theseus found his way out again by following the path indicated by the thread.(The myth later turned into a fairy tale with Thumbelina and the breadcrumbs...)

This, in very brief summary, is the myth. There has been a desire to identify the labyrinth archaeologically with the very large and complex royal palace at Knossos. But the identification does not seem at all credible.



However, our engineer found nlle Solovetski Islands a great variety of labyrinths, called "vavilons," which would be representations of the original labyrinth, that of the Atlanteans.

We have seen how Atlantis is connected to Poseidon, to Orion, to the two-handed axe (originally a stone axe, a *Tomahawk*), to the Hyades, a real puzzle for those who want to try their hand at giving a coherent form to all these myths. And our good engineer brings us another important piece: there exists in Karelia a locality called Kem, the same name the Egyptians gave to their land, Upper Egypt, which unified with Lower Egypt around 3100 B.C. However, the location of Upper Egypt has never been found with certainty, and they have been willing to identify it with the Sudan, somewhat arbitrarily. What about the predynastic pharaohs, predating that very date, of whom no archaeological evidence has been found in Egypt? The hypothesis is fascinating, a culture arrived from the far north that conditioned the development of the Egyptian culture we all know (albeit superficially). And the author also informs us about the discovery of the remains of three small pyramids on a small island in the White Sea: what a combination, these pyramids would also be arranged like the stars in Orion's belt!

This is only a very small mention of the analyses and studies reported in the astonishing book by Boltoni, to whom our thanks are due for his dogged determination to seek a truth that has remained veiled for millennia.

Just in time to add that Bulloni has published two other very interesting books, *The Sacred Labyrinth* and *Archaeoastronomical Analysis of the Solovetsky Islands*. In the former he takes up the theme of the labyrinth as a map of the island, which he believes was used at one time as a burial place, hypothetically of predynastic pharaohs, with an interesting analysis of Egyptian cosmogonic myths. It highlights the fact that the Egyptians had anything but superficial knowledge of astronomical phenomena.

Among other things, it also hints at the possibility that seasonal migrations of birds may have influenced a population flow to the far north, in one with the obvious links to the cosmogonic egg myth. But I think I am following this interesting lead separately.

Instead, in the second book he carries through to the end a careful search for alignments of places and ancient buildings in the White Sea area. He would thus have identified a large number of significant alignments that would have marked the passage of the stars in 2588 B.C., when the polar star was represented by Thuban (alpha draconis) and the planets were visible to the naked eye thanks to an eclipse of the sun.

I am well aware that to talk about archaeoastronomy is to enter a minefield, because there are those who consider it a science and those who assert that it is a mystification. I am certainly not an expert, nor do I claim to impose any opinion on the subject. Those who wish to explore the subject further, please read up on your discipline and try to verify its validity. Experimental method. I hope no one is picking on poor Galileo, who was already quite abused by the Inquisition.

MUNINN RETURNS

What if we are just someone's memory?

– Stanisław Jerzy Lec

Yes, Munnin suddenly arrived and whispered something in my ear. A new, unpredictable piece of information that substantiates and confirms the suppositions so far. An article on the Web with shocking content. Some facts were known to me, such as the existence of the *peaviru*, the paths, already mentioned in his time by the late prof. Jacques de Mahieu (*El gran viaje del Dios Sol, La agonia del Dios Sol, Drakkares en el Amazonas*, *El Rey Vikingo del Paraguay*) that crossed the Amazon from Peru to the coasts of Brazil, created with a grass resistant to the attack of jungle vegetation, and that of the *Fuente magna*, a stone artifact of Tiwanakota origin with inscriptions in proto Sumerian cuneiform characters.

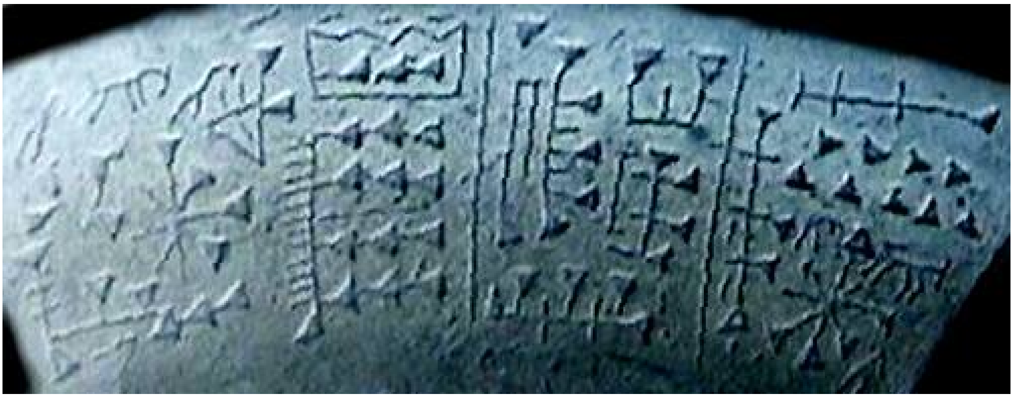
I have obtained a wonderful photograph of the details of this mysterious artifact at www.arquelogicas.ar/sumerios-en-america-precolombina/htm, which I think could be very interesting in researching the presence of currents of ancient non-American civilizations in the Americas. Many consider it a fake, however, it should be noted that we are dealing with an object that was made in absolute harmony with the Mesopotamian tradition, containing two texts, one in cuneiform script and the other in another Semitic language of possible Sinaitic extraction.

With reference to the symbols used, this would be an object dating from the transitional period between ideographic and cuneiform writing. This would date it to 3500-3000 B.C. Translations of the various panels would be, according to a North American epigraphist:

Approach the future with a protected person in the name of the great Nia.

This oracle is favorable to people who seek to achieve purity and establish character.

The divine Nia determines purity, offers gladness, establishes character. Use this talisman, the right shrine, anoint the shrine. The priest takes the oath to obtain purity and a favorable oracle. Open a unique light for all who aspire to a noble life.



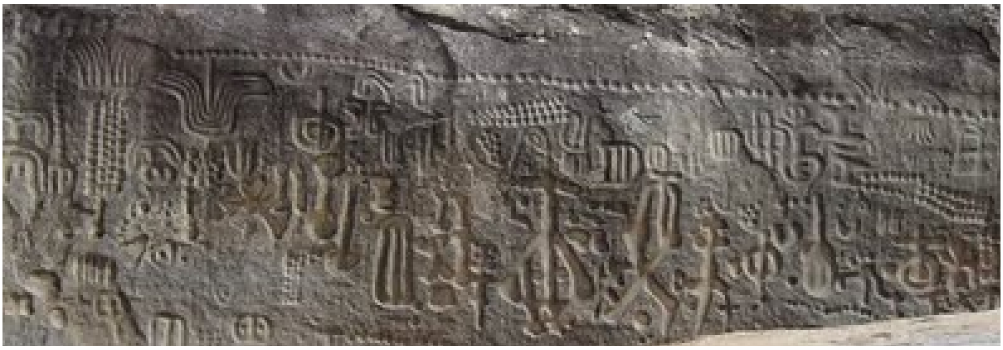
I must admit that, despite my wanderings in Bolivia, I had missed the Pokotia monolith, a Tihuanakota-type statue with apparently Proto-Sumerian inscriptions, found in 1960 a few kilometers from Tiwanaku. Just a few years later, in 2002, the inscriptions had been discovered, in the interpretation of which several scholars have ventured, albeit with different and discordant results. Some found an indication of the appearance of a supernova in the sky of Bolivia around the year 1000 e.v. But then what do the Sumerians have to do with it?

Some have argued instead that the inscription was about an oracle named Putaki. Personally, I do not find this explanation very convincing.

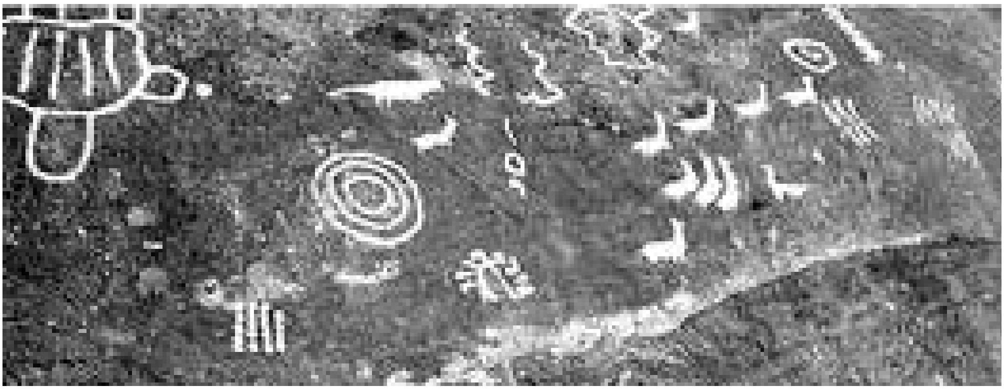
While the *Fuente magna* evidences Sumerian-type cuneiform writing, the Pokotia monolith seems to me to be much more recent and the writing only vaguely resembles, by a fair stretch of the imagination, Sumerian.

Then there are, dulcis in fundo, those who believe that the monolith is evidence of an Atlantean civilization of Negroid African origin, which would have been the origin of ancient civilizations, such as Greek, Egyptian, Chinese, Peruvian, and so on. Human imagination has no limits.

As for *Pedra do Ingà*, a twenty-three-meter long and three-meter high monolith completely covered with petroglyphs, its dating is highly speculative. Various hypotheses vary between 6000 and 1000 B.C. Carved in bas-relief are several figures of animals, flowers, men, and alleged depictions of constellations such as Orion.



It seems very interesting to me because of the graffiti, similar to the graffiti in Cerro Colorado, in the Rio Seco department of Cordoba Province in Argentina.



A separate mention deserves mention of the so-called Father Carlo Crespi Metallic Library in Ecuador, of whose existence I was completely unaware. If the information gathered by the researchers was correctly interpreted, it would be a truly shocking set of artifacts. I was able to see several photographs of the finds and an old film, all material that could be easily found on the Web: stones engraved with strange writing, statuettes and gold and silver foils with incredible designs. Many images have been used by the Swiss writer Erich von Däniken to support his own fanciful theses, but that does not detract from the fact that this is unique and very strange material. Many archaeologists have felt, often even without a site visit, that it is a fraud. It may be.

Of particular interest were the metal sheets, which contained writing, something that had been observed only in the Crespi collection in the 1970s but has since been found elsewhere and accepted as "authentic" by the archaeological establishment.

Perhaps the sheets would be the best evidence that this collection is truly genuine, even if archaeologists continue to label it a hoax. It is likely that many items are fakes, but certain symbolic representations reminiscent of India and the Middle East make me wonder...

Everyone will be able to form their own opinion. Personally, I am very skeptical. But I cannot deny that I have no absolute certainties.

BIRDS

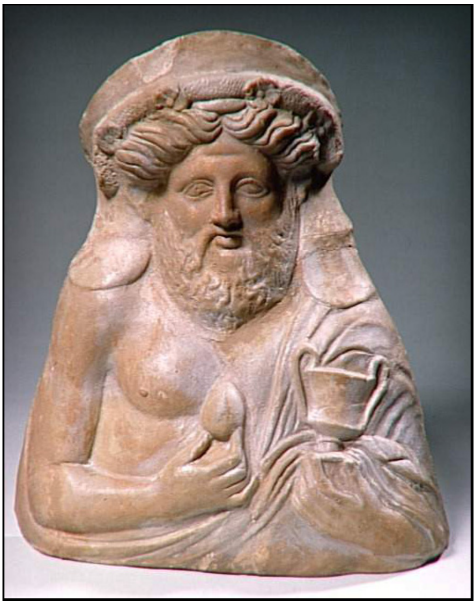
The eyes of the hawk

are now gloomy

As the quail garrulous.

– Matsuo Basho

Marco Bulloni, as I had mentioned above, had hypothesized that bird migrations had struck the imagination of ancient peoples to the point of prompting them to learn about and explore the destination of flocks of birds. It is highly probable that the coasts and islands of the White Sea, rich in water and vegetation, were among the destinations of various migratory birds. In this regard I recall a booklet by Christine Dequerlor (*Les oiseaux messagers des Dieux*) in which she observes, in all parts of the globe, the frequency of signs and symbols associated with birds. The author is certainly questionable (and debated) for some of her theories, however, it is undeniable that she has done extensive research, finding painted or engraved traces in the dark caves of prehistory and in the temples of civilizations that disappeared centuries and millennia ago. The soul, among the Egyptians, was represented as a bird, usually an ibis or phoenix, while in pre-Columbian Mexico the souls of warriors who died in battle were reincarnated in the form of hummingbirds. In the mythology of Easter Island there was the cult of Tangata manu, the bird-man (whose images I was able to admire at the Orongo archaeological site), to whom was dedicated the well-known annual ceremony of collecting a manutara (a seabird) egg on the nearby islet Motu Nui. Omens issued by seeing the flights of birds were famous, from the Persians (Herodotus quotes an omen from King Darius), to the Greeks and Etruscans, who spread them to Rome, from the Incas to the Aztecs. And we also find birds in the myth of Noah, those of Jupiter, Horus and Thot.



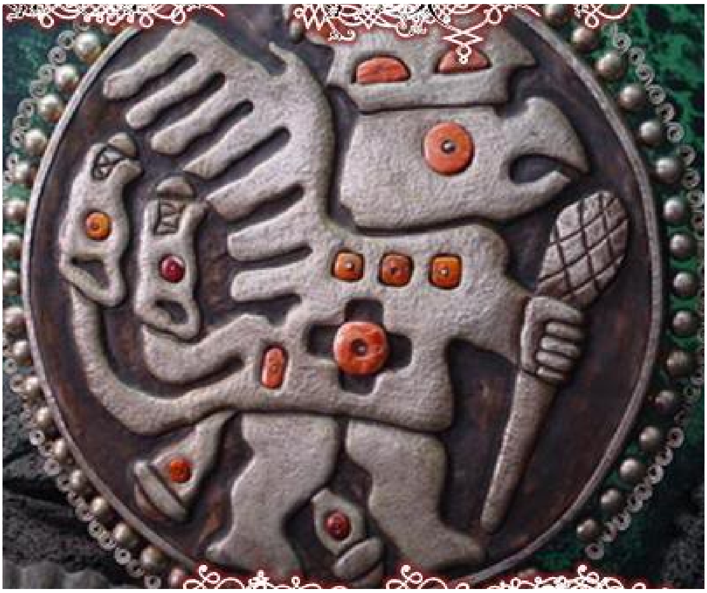
In most cosmogonies we find a primordial egg, often spawned from formless chaos, as in the Kalevala runos, the Vedic texts of India, the *Chan-hai-king* (Book of Mountains and Seas), an ancient Chinese geography text, In Pharaonic Egypt we find the god Thot with the head of an Ibis, while Horus is represented as a hawk.

It is certainly no coincidence that the egg is a symbol of resurrection-Dionysus was born from an egg and is often depicted with an egg in his hand.

In many countries of Europe there is the custom of preparing hard-boiled eggs for Easter, often painted red; an ancient custom derived from the celebration of the festival of spring, of the new year. This festival corresponds to the Zoroastrian festival of spring, which I have already mentioned, in which painted and golden eggs were given as gifts. Strange traditions have survived, while the myths have been emptied of their initial meaning. From the cosmic egg to Easter eggs and then to Fabergé eggs. The form endures the millennia, but the substance fades from human memory.

In almost all the flood stories we find birds flying in search of the land. Thus in Gilgamesh there are, in order, the dove, the swallow and the raven, while in the biblical account the raven comes out first, and eventually the dove, which returns with a twig.

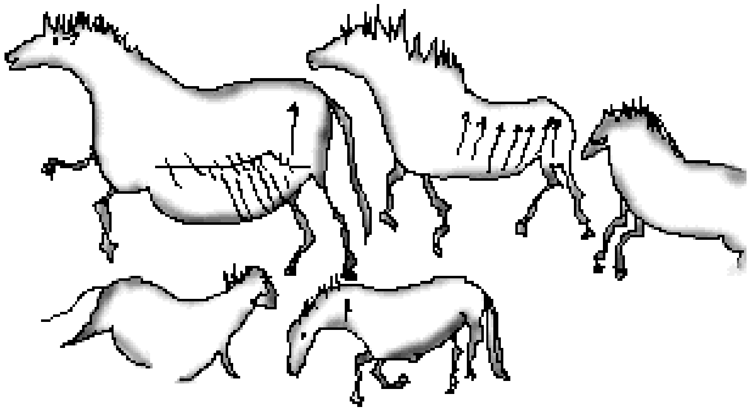
In Tiwanaku, Bolivia, we have a monolith, the Puerta del Sol, where strange winged condor-headed figures are depicted, which also appear in Chimú jolleria.



There are also several constellations representing birds: the Raven in the southern sky, near the equator, above the back of the Hydra, already listed by Ptolemy; the Swan, also called the Northern Cross; its star α, called Deneb (tail) by the Arabs, is one of the brightest and most important stars in the northern hemisphere; the Eagle, south of the Lyra, whose most important star is Altair (flying eagle in Arabic).

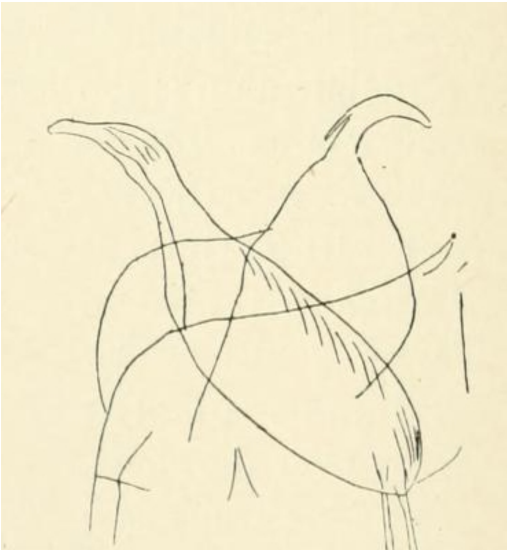
The Milky Way, for peoples near the polar circle (Siberia, Lapland, Finland and Estonia) would always represent the Path of the Wild Ducks, messengers of other worlds. This path is the luminous road that souls follow from the earthly plane to the celestial plane.

We imagine Paleolithic men as savages, yet they had developed an art that we still admire in the caves of the Cantabrian; their flint tools were as efficient as metal ones; their cyclopean constructions, dolmens, menhirs, stand the test of time, while our constructions are ephemeral.

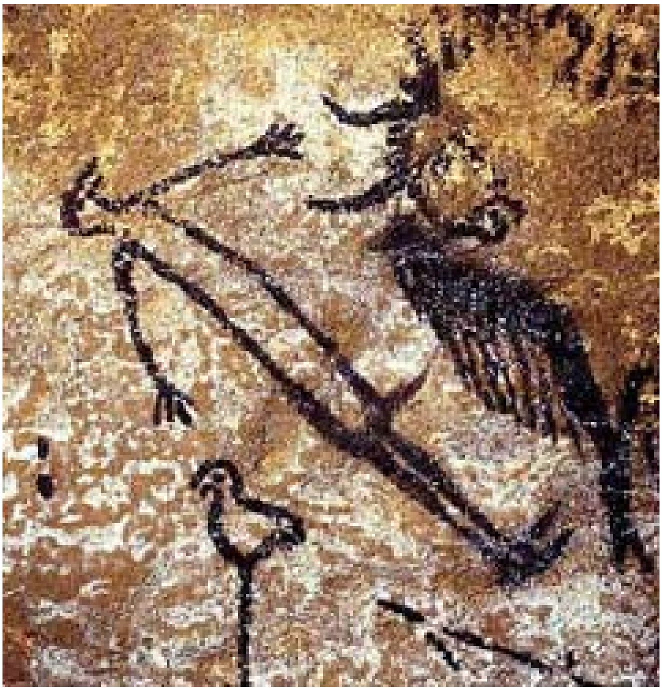


What about dating? According to the studies of Francisca Martin-Canó Abreu (http://galeon.com/contraandrocentrismo/curri.htm, a very interesting site), there are mares shot with arrows in the Lascaux cave in Dordogne, which have been interpreted as a metaphorical representation of the Hyades. An 18,000-year-old graffito. And many others representing the Hyades, Pleiades, Orion in the form of animals. This scholar's approach is somewhat akin to de Santillana's, considering that the artworks of prehistoric humans reflect myths associated with the constellations.

Graffiti representing birds (Ariége, El Pendo near Santander), ithyphallic bird men (Altamira), and bird-masked man heads (Marsoulas in the Alta Garonne, Casares and Altamira in Spain) have been discovered in many caves in the Franco-Cantabrian area.



And also in the famous Lascaux cave near Montigny, discovered accidentally by four teenagers during World War II in September 1940, one of the oldest depictions of man associated with a bird was found. This "Sistine Chapel of prehistory," as it has been called, is estimated to be between 17,000 and 20,000 years old. In the midst of the large animals, strong bulls wounded to death, we find in a central position a separate scene: a stiff, beak-faced man, almost in a state of ecstasy, with a bird (perhaps his soul?) next to him resting on a pole and an abstract sign, which appears many times in the cave, that could perhaps represent a branch, almost a magic wand.

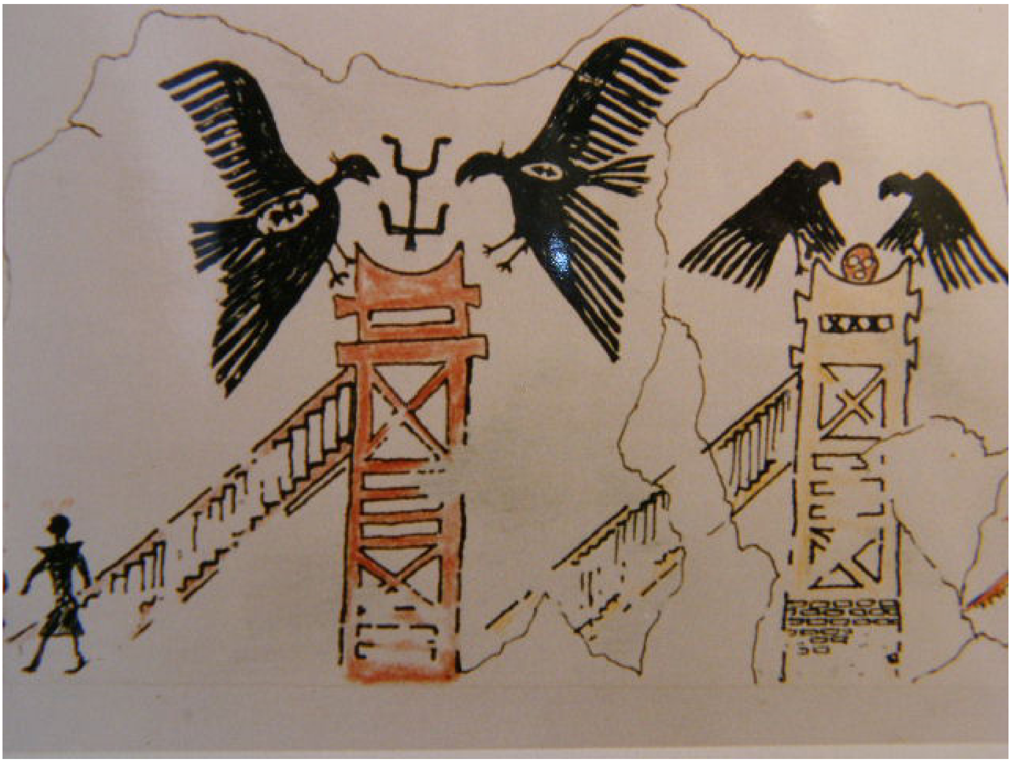


However, this "wand" strangely resembles an arbalestrille or Jacob's staff, an archaic tool for calculating the height of the stars, an archaic precursor to the astrolabe. Some have wanted to interpret the Lascaux image by seeing a shaman confronting the spirit of the bison, all related to some of the constellations that passed in the meridian at midnight of the summer solstice in 16,500 B.C. A shamanic cosmography would be depicted here, which would also be found in the Egyptian myth of Dun-anui, the falcon-headed god, confronting the bull Meskhetiu. Appearing here would be the stars of the "Summer Triangle": Deneb (Alpha Cygni), Vega (Alpha Lyrae) and

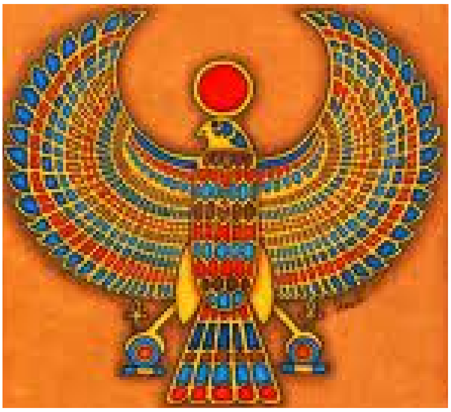
Altair (Alpha Aquilae), stars represented through the "eyes" of the bird-man, bison and staff with bird. According to one hypothesis, the "geometry" of the scene would give some astronomical values particular to the location and time of Lascaux. Further in-depth astronomical calculations would include the obliquity of the ecliptic, the precession of the equinoxes, the proper motions of the stars, the horizontal parallax of the moon, the rays of the solar disk and the moon, refraction, the visual horizon, and, finally, the stellar phases. This system of astronomical elements would be connected with the biological, symbolic and mythical aspects of the images, indicating an archaic and cosmogonic cosmology of prehistory. A great many shamanic and totemic elements can be identified in the cave images. The figures depicted would often identify with constellations and planets.

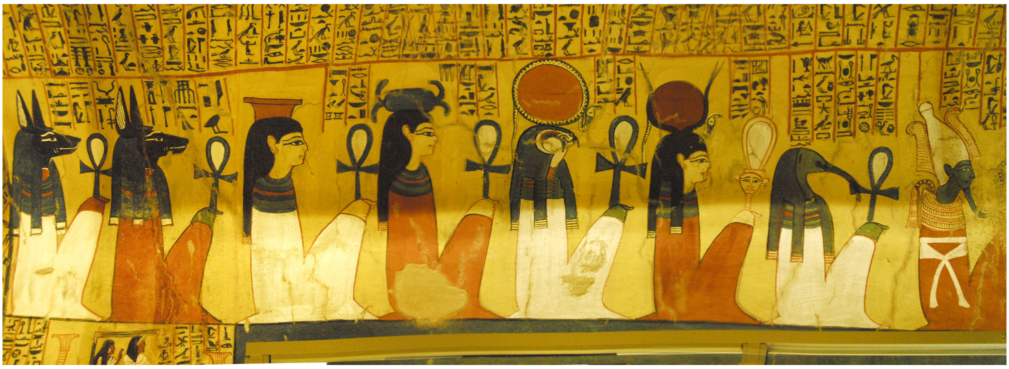
The shamans would have been not only spiritual healers but also experts in cosmography. They had observed the sky and studied the celestial figures and their movements very carefully, believing that all phenomena between heaven and earth interacted with each other. Every action would be found under astral influence. The same concept is found in the *Tabula Smaragdina* attributed to Hermes Trimegistus: "That which is below is like that which is above, and that which is above is like that which is below, to make the miracle of one thing." It was important for them to know the right time to tell myths, performing rituals and ceremonies. However, this shaman facing the bull reminds me too much of Orion, even though the constellations are different.

In Chatal Huyuk, Turkey, the remains of an advanced 10,000-year-old urban civilization were found in 1958. The complex covers more than 16 hectares, but only 5 percent has been explored. The burial ritual is interesting, which involved the dead being exposed to birds of prey for their flesh to be removed, then the bones were interred in the same house, usually under the bed. The ritual appears to be just what was practiced until a few years ago by Mazdeans in Iran, in the Towers of Silence, or by Tibetans and Mongols. With the bones, clothes and objects of the deceased were also buried. Weapons and tools for the men, obsidian mirrors for the women, so one is led to believe that they believed in a future life.



Matriarchy reigned here, as evidenced by the presence of statuettes of the mother goddess (quite shapely according to the Paleolithic style) and the most important place in the house where the mother's bed was placed, under which her skeleton was interred. Paintings of bulls and large heads of these animals molded in clay with real horns attached were connected with religious worship, probably a symbol of virile and generative power. Vultures, which were supposed to be in charge of plucking the bones of the dead, were also the object of a cult that does not appear very clear, however. They appear sometimes with outstretched wings and human legs, while grasping headless men who seem to float in the air. Numerous skulls are depicted under wall frescoes. Other times they are seen around towers where corpses are displayed. In contrast, in Scandinavia, swans are found carved into the rock. According to a legend, reported by Elianus the Sophist (*On the Nature of Animals*), during Celtic ceremonies, when the officiants sang their canticles, swans flocked from everywhere, alighting on menhirs and triliths beating their wings and mixing their songs with those of the priests to greet the sun. The winged solar disk, symbol of Horus in Egypt, recalls the image of the Mazdean angels.





In Egyptian mythology the goddess Mut was represented in the form of a vulture, the god Geb bore on his head the hieroglyphic of his name, a goose, Maat daughter of Ra was distinguished by a feather fixed vertically on her hair, Ammon Ra, god of the city of Thebes, wore a crown with two long feathers. And the god Thot, inventor of writing, guardian of magic formulas, measurer of time, assimilated later to Hermes Trimegistus, thrice great, was represented with the head of an ibis.All winged deities or those with bird attributes should also be remembered. Among the Sumerians we find Nergal, originally a solar and fire deity, who later became lord of the underworld: a winged lion with a human head. However, this deity was also in charge of plagues (like Apollo) and floods (like Poseidon Enosigeon).

And the Babylonian Ishtar, goddess of love and war, lady of the light of Venus, derived from the Sumerian Inanna, also possesses wings. But returning to Inanna, she was sister of Ereshkigal, goddess of the underworld and wife of Gugalanna, the great Bull of Heaven, slain by Gilgamesh. Assur, the main deity of the Assyrians, was often represented inscribed in a winged circle.

Shamash, the Mesopotamian sun god, recurred the sky on his chariot drawn by white winged horses. In Egypt Isis was represented as a winged woman or hawk.

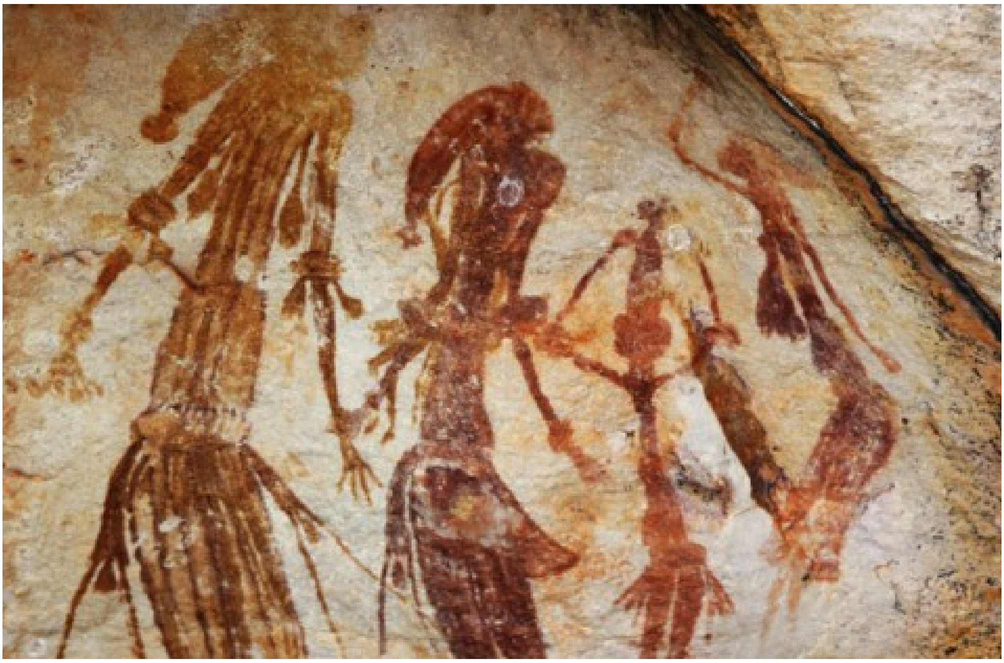
The Akkadian Ninurta sometimes appeared as a winged man, sometimes as a lion, always winged. In the Bible, Second Book of Kings, Nisroc, an eagle-headed Assyrian demon, is mentioned. Another mythical bird of ancient Persia, the Homa, who lived in the heavenly spheres and could be called by men with a feather of his own.

Often depicted two-headed. Like the Zoroastrian Angiras, their heirs, the Christian Angels are also equipped with wings. The Seraphim have as many as six, studded with eyes as a symbol of universal knowledge.

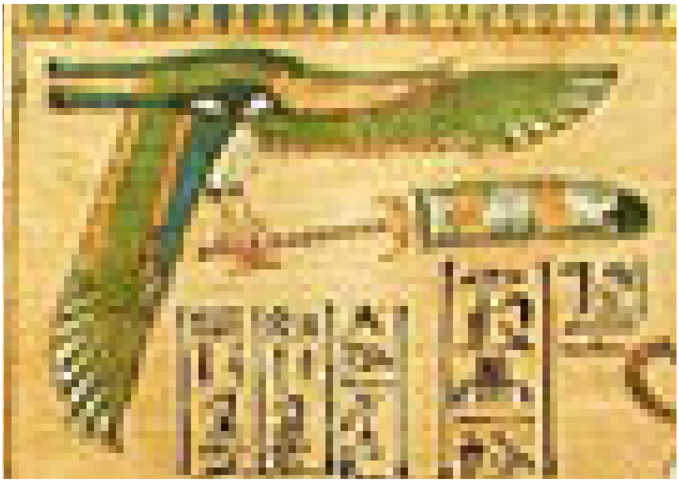
In Australia, Aboriginal people still retouch the old pictographs that cover caves and shelters under rocks, which tradition says are the work of the creator gods wondjinas, spirits of rain and clouds.

Among them should be mentioned Ungud, the rainbow serpent, a symbol of the union of Heaven and Earth, and Walaganda, a representation of the Milky Way, aided by the bird Kujon, which cleans up dreams. In their mythology, a magpie frees the Sun held by Heaven resting on Earth; other birds are dream beings. There are also two civilizing heroes who came from

Heaven in the form of birds: Banar as a wild peacock and Kurunguli as a crane.



A final mention of winged eyes in ancient Egypt. Is this Udjat a wonderful and complex symbol, part of the sacred vulture, Nekbeth, sometimes united with the sacred serpent, whose body forms a knot, through which the pole of life passes, similar to Jacob's staff previously mentioned. As it appears in the Book of the Dead.



From what would the myths of animals, almost always birds, going to the bottom of the sea to collect a handful of soil, which then grows giving rise to dry land? Questions, always questions.

PARALIPOMENI

I am aware of the state of my ignorance
And ready to learn from anyone,
regardless of its qualification.

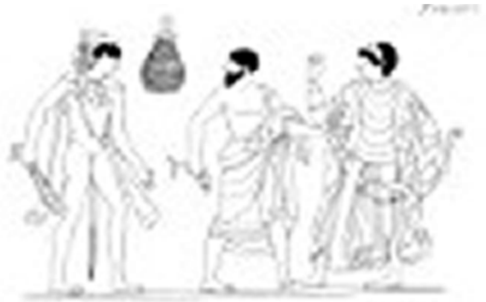
- Isaac Asimov

I have gathered here a miscellany of different information, which I am not always able to vouch for, but which indicates both the interest in the search for ancient things, as well as the variety of opinions on the subject, and the amount of relevant data.

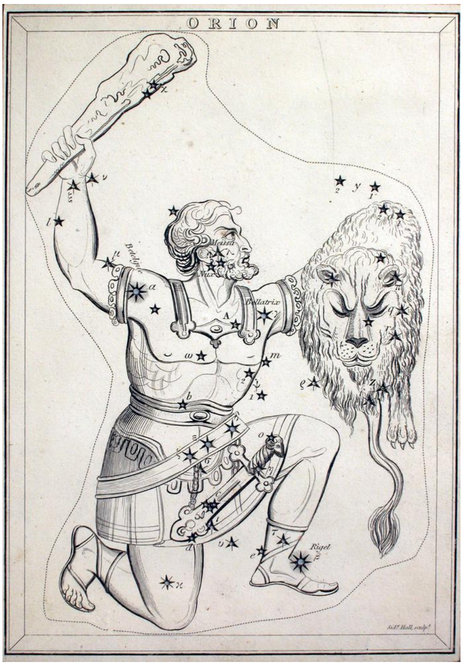
Testing the technical possibilities of prehistory, to check the ability of Neolithic man to clear an area, an interesting experiment was made with a 4,000-year-old stone axe, taken from a Danish museum, on which a wooden handle similar to the original ones was mounted. Using the axe, properly sharpened, with short and quick blows it was possible to cut down a 60 cm diameter pine tree in 20 minutes and a 30 cm oak tree in half an hour. The use of stone tools persisted even with the advent of the Metal Age, only slowly increasing the use of the new material, which was expensive and required special skills. The copper and bronze tools, weapons for hunting, warfare, farming and domestic use that we can now find displayed in museums were rare luxury items, reserved for the few. Even the much more abundant iron, which surpassed and replaced copper and bronze items, was available sparingly during many centuries. (Source: Encyclopædia Britannica).

In an interesting book published way back in 1832 (*Etrusco Museo Chiusino, by its owners published, with the addition of some Ragionamenti by Prof. Domenico Valeriani , etc.*) and full of pictures there is a reproduction of an Etruscan painting on a vase, where Hercules, Neptune and Diana would appear. Thus comments the editor of the book: "...they are never from the fable in any way brought close together, so far as I am aware. If, however, I have recourse to astronomical fables, I find to untie the knot. For them the first figure is already not Hercules, but Orion, whom astronomers represent with the figure of Hercules. Many are the fables composed on this ideal subject, the principal circumstances of which to be noted in dilucidation of the painting here exhibited, are that he was reputed to be the son of Neptune, while in the tenor of what Theon narrates, it was this constellation singularly observed by sailors (omissis). His position in the sky on the river Eridanus, which emerges from his left foot near the constellation of the two Pisces, caused the painter to place before the herculean figure of Orion his parent Neptune, while astronomers fixed in Aquarius the celestial river, and then the two Dolphins below for symbols of Neptune who is the tutelary deity of February, to which greater intelligence placed the painter two fishes in place of the trident, while ordinarily that deity has the trident and only one fish. It is said, moreover, that Orion being hunting with Diana the chaste, wished to do her violence, but the lightning right shot a dart at her and immediately killed her, and then moved to pity him, she wished to honor him by the likeness of their hunting passion, and placed him in the heavens. To explain this fable we must have recourse to Hyginus, where he says: that Orion sets at the birth of the last signs of Scorpio, and the first of Sagittarius which last sign is affected to Diana, according to the distribution of the twelve principal deities in the twelve signs of the zodiac. (omissis)....far known the relation between Orion, Neptune and Diana; with which representation I probably wished to recall a sidereal time, perhaps from the one to the other equinox, as following the two extremes, Scorpio and Pisces."

As can be noted, the relationship between the myth of Orion and the constellation Scorpio was not ignored. In fact, according to another version of the myth it was Diana who fell in love with the sinewy giant, who rejected her because he loved the Pleiades. So she killed him.



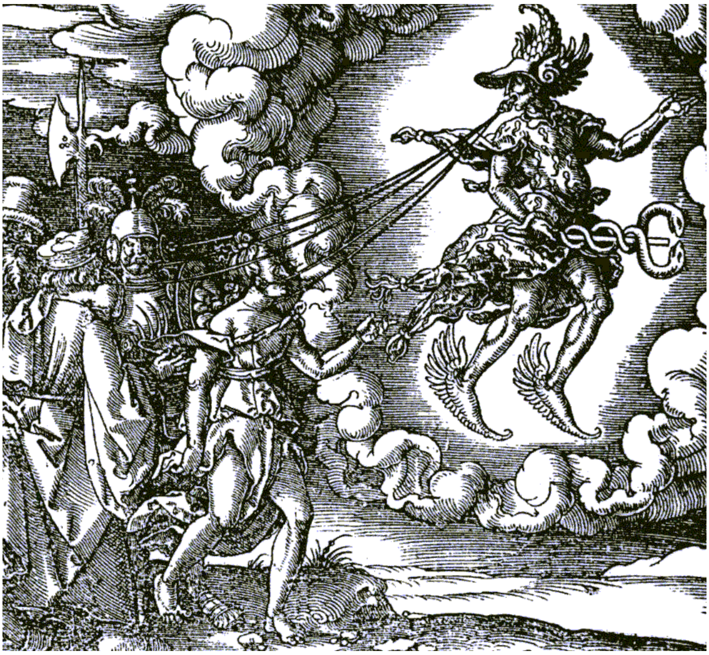
However, regardless of the causes of his death, he was placed in the sky as the brightest constellation, intent on facing Taurus with club and shield, accompanied by his trusty dog. We have not found, however, among the classical myths, any reference to a fight with Taurus. Perhaps the origin of the extremely ancient Orion myth coincides with that of Heracles. Both were depicted covered by a lion skin (Heracles' Nemean Lion) and armed with a club.



And we know that Heracles' seventh effort was the capture of the Bull of Crete, father of the Minotaur. Already the Sumerians had seen in the constellation their hero Gilgamesh fighting against the Bull of Heaven. According to a false Roman etymology, Orion's name is attributed to the urine of the gods, with which it is said to have been generated. But it should be considered instead that the Sumerian name of the constellation was Uru Anna, meaning light of heaven, while Taurus was Gud Anna, bull of heaven. While Uru Anna was also usually identified with Dumuzi-Tammuz, the god of nature who is reborn every year, the hero Gilgamesh anticipated the Greek Heracles, bearing the same attributes: club (which we will find again in the form of a mace as the pharaoh's badge) and lion skin. The myth is also found in Italy among the Etruscans (Hercle) and the Samnites (Hereklúí Kerríiuí). Among the Gauls it has been associated with Ogmios, depicted as an old, balding man, always armed with a bow and club, from whose tongue come chains dragging a group of men. However, it is thought that Ogmios can also be assimilated with Ogma, the Celtic god of war (he fought in the second battle of Mag Tured alongside the Tuatha De Danann) and writing (he had invented the ogam script), who also had functions as a psychopomp.

The well-known Dutch linguist Jan de Vries in his book "*Keltische Religion*" argues that among the Celts there was almost no difference between Mars and Mercury, seen as two expressions of one and the same god, just as the Germanic Wotan was assimilated, as a psychopomp, to Hermes.

On a stele at Donon, in the Vosges, Hercules is depicted wearing the sandals of Mercury, with on his right shoulder, instead of a lion's skin, a cloak in whose folds he carries fruit and a pine cone. In his left hand he carries a long scythe and with his right he leans on a horn.



We have just named the Tuatha De Danann, the divine people of Goddess Danu or Danann (depending on the philological interpretation), who lived in the northern islands of the world learning occult science and magic, Druidic arts, witchcraft and wisdom in the four cities of Falias, Gorias, Murias and Findias, where they had four magical talismans, the stone that cried out when a king stepped on it, the spear that made all battles won (doesn't it remind us of Longinus' spear?), the sword that once drawn struck dead anyone who opposed it (the Kunasagi sword in Japan, Orlando's Durendal, Arthur's Excalibur, the Cid's Tizona, Charlemagne's Joyeuse, the Irish Caladbolgh, Muhammad's Dhū l-fiqār, etc.), a cauldron whose contents could feed any number of people (a cornucopia of abundance or an *ante litteram* multiplication of loaves and fishes?). However, even the Thuata were eventually defeated by the Fomori, a people of demigods, in what is known as the second battle of Mag Tuired (*Cath Maige Tuired*). After the battle the goddess Morrigan intoned this chant, known as "the second prophecy."

The world I will see I will not like,
the summer without flowers,
the cows without milk,
the women without modesty,
the men without courage,
the conquests without kings,
the trees without fruit,
the seas without fish.
The wrong judgments of old men,
the false judgments of judges,
every man a traitor,
every child a thief.
The son in the father's bed,
the father in the son's bed,
each will make himself brother-in-law to his brother.
Time of ungodliness!
The son will betray the father,
the daughter will betray the mother...

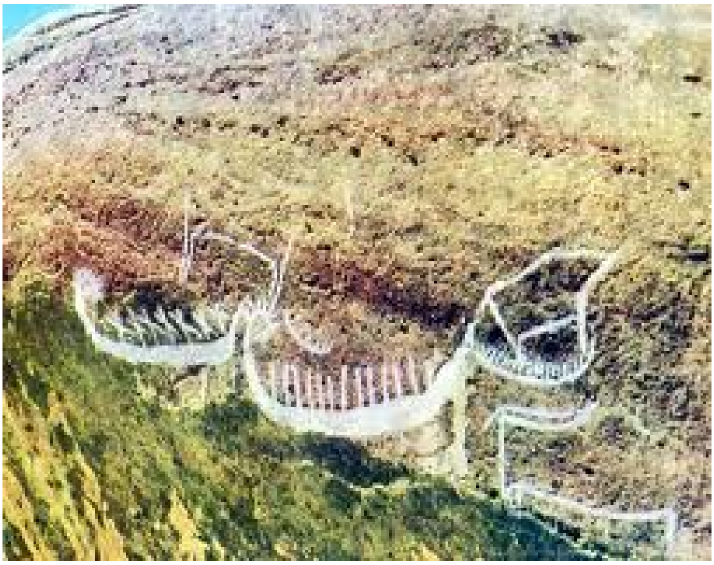
A truly awful apocalyptic vision of the future, one that portends a dark world, that of the Kaliyuga.

This is counterbalanced by what Sri Krishna says to Arjuna in the *Baghavadgītā*:

"Despite the fact that I am birthless and of immutable essence, nevertheless by becoming the Lord of creation, and entering my cosmic nature, I clothe myself in the cosmic garments of maya, my illusory power; whenever virtue declines and vice predominates, I incarnate as an Avatar. From age to age I appear in visible form to protect the virtuous, destroy the wicked and restore justice."

For the record: in Gobustan (Azerbaidjan), in an ancient rock sanctuary, images of ships very similar to Egyptian and Mesopotamian ones were also found, among several thousand graffiti, amid aurochs, wild horses, deer, goats, elk, gazelles, big cats, wild boars, camels, bird men, male and female human figures, dance and hunting scenes, wheeled vehicles, and marine animals (including a dolphin or a 4.30-meter-long whale).

Petroglyphs with boats, of the type of Egyptian solar boats from 7000 B.C., would date back 10,000 years, when the Black Sea and the Caspian were connected. The Gobustan rock carvings were discovered almost by accident when a stone quarry was being excavated around 1930. The area is full of huge boulders and rock formations, and one of the workers had noticed some unusual graffiti on the rocks. A large number of petroglyphs, previously hidden by a landslide, were unearthed. Additional drawings were found inside what appeared to be man-made caves. The first archaeological investigation of the petroglyphs was begun in 1939 by archaeologist Isaak Jafarzade. Between 1940 and 1965, researchers identified and documented about 3,500 rock carvings on 750 rocks, some dating back to the 12th century B.C., although it is believed that humans lived there earlier.



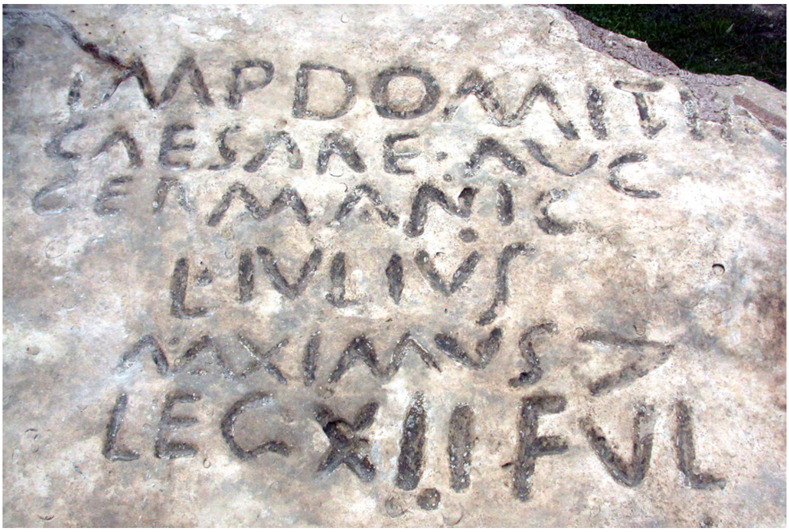
In addition to the more realistic images, many graphic and geometric symbols were engraved in the Gobustan rocks. These symbols perhaps represent abstract concepts such as elements of the natural environment (fire, sun, water, life, and earth).

Researchers believe it is possible that the caves, where these drawings were found, were used for ritual and secretive animal purposes. In interpreting the symbols the it was understood that the circle represents the sun, the semicircle represents the moon, and the zigzag lines represent rain and water.

Other symbols displayed include triangles, swastikas, crosses, labyrinthine rectangular and cyclic images. Sometimes attempts have been made to interpret the meaning of these symbols by relating the abstract signs to nearby figurative graffiti. For example, on a rock on Mt. Beyukdash, the image of a boat is located at the side of zigzag markings, which could be an effort to represent water waves.

Similarities are also noted between Gobustan engravings and *Tamga* (totemic markings or seals used by Eurasian nomads such as Alans, Mongols, Scythians, and Sarmatians). In the Gobustan there are several instances where the swastika coincides with images of animals and people. The swastika here dates back as early as 4,000 B.C. These images would require more attention before ascribing historical significance to them.

A curiosity: there is also an inscription there made by a Roman soldier of the 12th Legion "Fulminata" at the time of Emperor Domitian.



Evidently the habit of defacing walls is not modern....

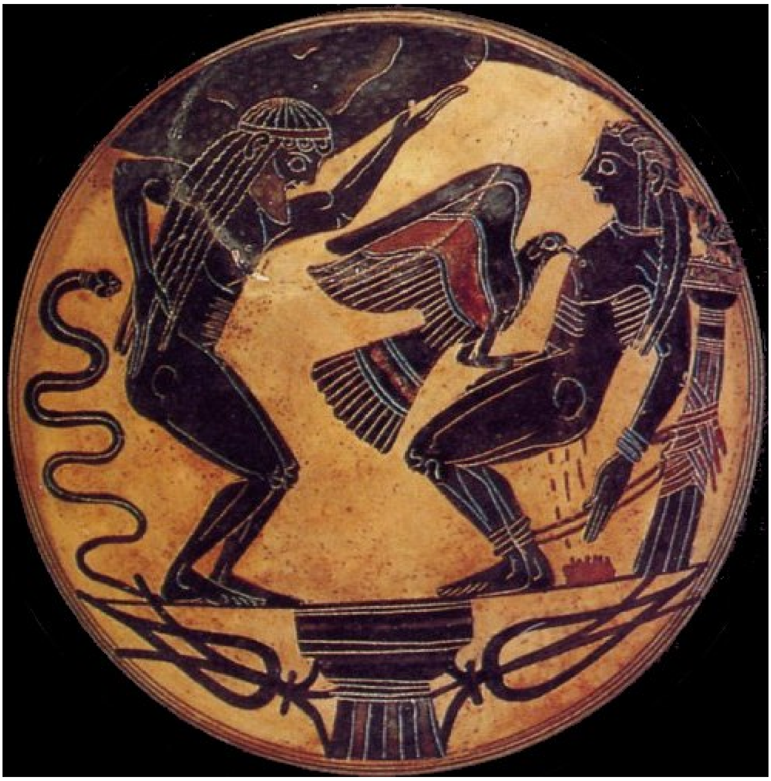
The region, which included ancient Caucasian Albania and Caucasian Iberia (or Iveria), had been subdued by Gnaeus Pompey and was inhabited by a number of peoples who called themselves Kartli, named after one of their legendary heroes, a certain Kartlos, and who said they came from a distant country called Arian-Kartli, mentioned in the medieval Georgian chronicle *The Conversion of Kartli*.

Let's turn for a moment to the fire myth, as the trusty crow suggests.

From the Greeks we learned the myth of Prometheus.

The Titan Prometheus (=he who first thinks) for the Greeks was a deity of fire; his myth came to us through the Greek poet Hesiod. He was a Titan, son of Japetus and Climene, a friend of man, who favored by opposing Zeus, from whom he stole fire to render it to men, after Zeus himself had taken it from them, although it was unbearably cold at that distant time. According to an archaic version, he would instead have been the son of a Giant, named Eurimedon, son of Uranus and Gaea, who had begotten him by seducing Hera, which would explain Zeus' aversion to Prometheus.

The father of the gods did not behave very nobly: he chained Prometheus, naked, to the highest and most weathered mountain and drove a pillar through his body. He then sent an eagle for it to rip open his chest and eternally devour his liver, which grew back during the night, vowing never to detach Prometheus from the rock. Zeus then had Hephaestus build a beautiful woman, Pandora, the first woman, the bearer of a vessel containing all evil. She married Epimetheus (=he who thinks late), the clumsiest of Prometheus' brothers (the others were Atlas, who was forced to support the entire vault of heaven with his own strength, and Menetius, who was killed by Zeus with a thunderbolt and then confined to Tartarus with the other Titans), who did not listen to his brother's advice and opened the fatal vase, from which all the evils and misfortunes of the world came out.

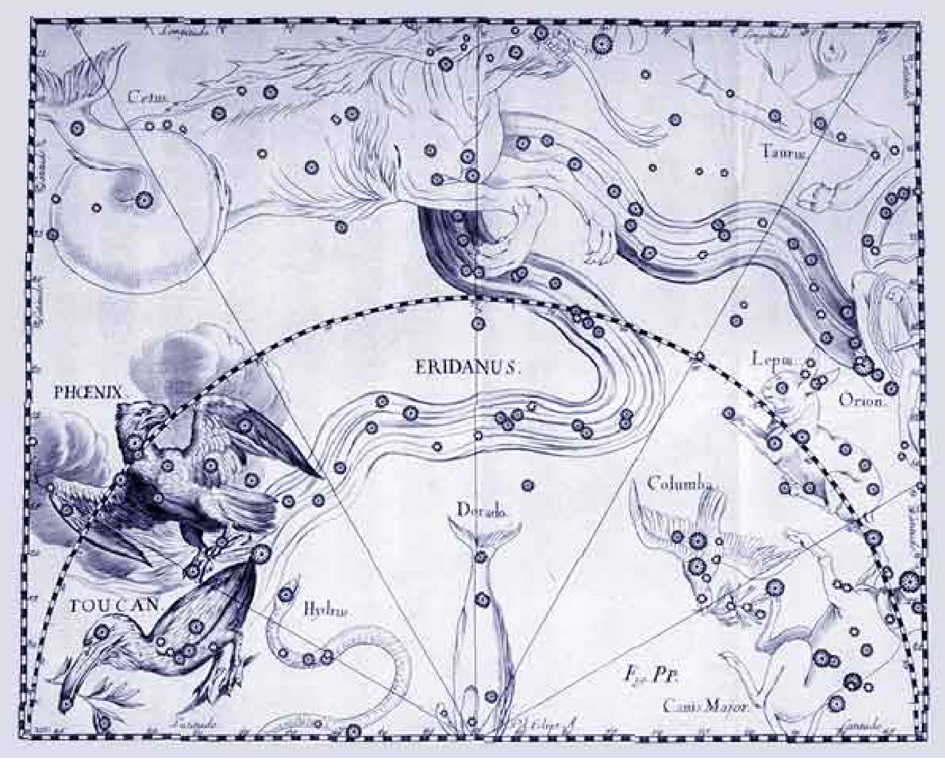


So far, very succinctly, the Greek myth. But fire represents a circle stretching across the universe by crossing the celestial poles and equinoctial points, which according to ancient mythologies passed through the zodiac sign of Gemini, still represented by two lines, two stakes, two sticks: the first tools for producing fire.

But de Santillana had pointed out that for American Indians it had been the deer that brought fire to men, and in Europe the deer had been a symbol of Kronos, the archaic titan. As in India it had been of Yama. And Prometheus, bringer of fire, had preceded Hephaestus, *deus faber*. But how can we not also remember the Dhul Qarnayn mentioned in the Quran, a two-headed figure from whose horns, east and west, the sun rose and set. Sometimes identified with Alexander the Great, who wore the horns of Ammon, and was related to Gilgamesh for his life of adventure.

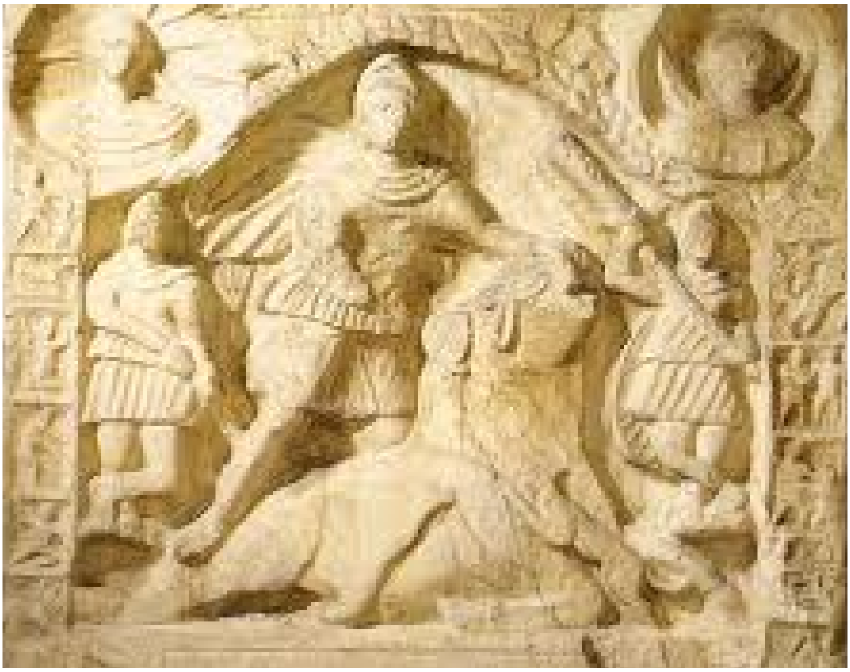
A mention of the upper waters.

In what we know as the constellation Aquarius, the ancients placed the Eridanus, whose source lies (as it happens) at the foot of Orion. For the ancient Greeks it represented the Po River, called the Eridanus, but for the Egyptians it represented, of course, the Nile, while for the Hindus it was the image of the Ganges. The constellation ended, for the ancients, with the star Acamar.



Meteorite impact? Eng. Bulloni hypothesizes this to explain the myth of Atlantis. After decades and decades of discussion, according to studies by Prof. James Kennett, of the University of California, it would be proven that about 12,800 years ago a dramatic and sudden event had occurred abruptly changing the climatic conditions of our planet. This change would have taken place within a year, no more. Many times in the past we had wondered how large animals such as mammoths, mastodons, giant sloths, American camels and horses, and the legendary saber-toothed tiger had suddenly disappeared. Kennett's recent study leads to the conclusion that it was indeed the 'impact of a large cosmic meteorite that brought sudden changes to large areas of the Earth. According to these studies, a distinct area involved in these sudden climate changes has been identified. This area includes both North and Central America and Europe. Analysis of samples taken from hundreds of areas of the earth has shown that in many of these there is an abundance of molten microspheres scattered over more than 50 million square kilometers on 4 continents. The geological layer containing these microspheres also contains a multitude of "exotic" materials such as "micro diamonds" and other unusual forms of carbon, such as fullerenes (carbon clusters), or even fusion elements between glass and iridium. The presence of these substances would be evidence that there really was a large meteoric impact 12,800 years ago. A paper was recently published with all the evidence gathered in the Proceedings of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. According to Prof. Kennett, this cosmic impact would have caused severe environmental degradation over vast areas through numerous processes that would have affected several continents at the level of fires and a significant increase in immense amounts of atmospheric dust, resulting in blocking the sun's rays long enough to cause starvation of larger animals.

It is hypothesized that the cult of Mithras killing Taurus represents in mythical form the exit of the Spring Equinox from the constellation Taurus (around 2000 B.C.). The earliest evidence for this cult dates back to 1400 B.C. , with Mithras associated with Varuna, Indra and the Ashvini in a treaty made between the Hittites and the Mitanni. Indeed, the latter were ruled by an aristocratic warrior caste that worshipped these gods. It should be noted that etymologically the name Mithras is related to treaty, friendship, oath. The depiction of Tauroctonia features a snake and a dog that appear to drink blood from the bull's wound, while a scorpion tries to wound the bull's testicles. But these animals are the very ones that give names to the constellations that were on the celestial equator, near the constellation Taurus, in the distant past, when during the spring equinox the sun was in the constellation Taurus.



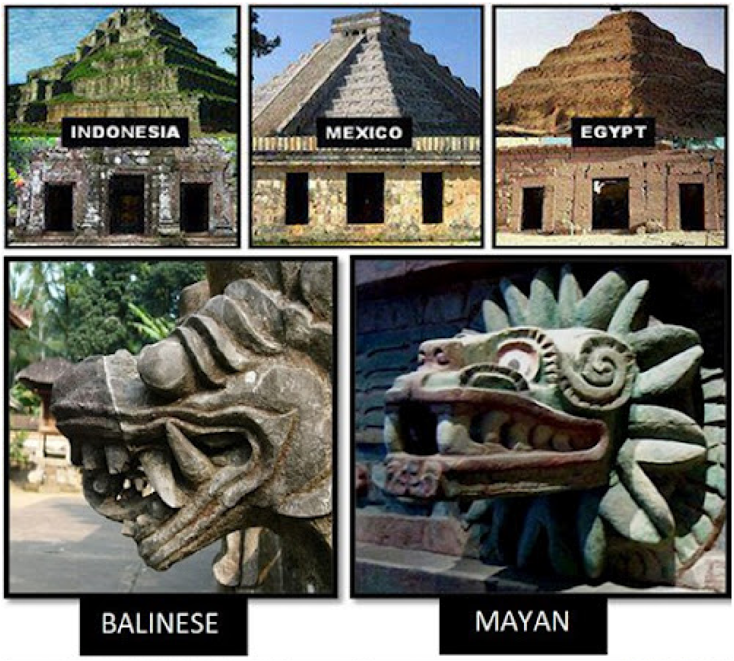
I want to take up the subject of the precession of the equinoxes for a moment: in a nutshell, due to the shift of the Earth's axis (which functions like the axis of a spinning top) every approximately 2160 years the spring equinox recedes by one sign of the zodiac. But zodiac signs do not correspond exactly to constellations. However periodically we move to another era, named by the corresponding constellation. The oldest era mentioned in the myths is the era of Leo: already in the Hindu *Vedas* this was the happy era of Surya, a solar deity. In the epic of Rama, the era of the Lion is remembered as the era of full and total success in battles against enemies. A Babylonian legend points to the lion as one of the first creatures of Tiamat, always symbolizing strength, victory, and splendor. In Greek mythology we find the age of the lion in tales concerning Heracles fighting the Nemean lion, who, a victim of the demigod, is placed in the sky to form a sign of the zodiac. His mortal skin becomes the garment of Hercules and these, in turn, an archetype of strength. Sun and Leo are symbols of strength, greatness and power. The symbol of the lion appears in every religion: for the Hebrews, the constellation represented the Lion of Judah. Even the Egyptians recognized the symbolic value of the Lion: proof of this is provided by the Sphinx, which for centuries has seemed to contemplate us from top to bottom, keeping its own secret. Even today, discussions continue about its age. Of the age of the Lion, which dates back 8,000 to 10,000 years, we do not possess secure information, but only a wealth of ancient myths. I remember that Wirth claimed that the sacred series of symbols, which he traced, showed a fault, a sudden break precisely in the Lion Age. Perhaps it is no accident that the next era, the Cancer era (8000-6000 years ago) left us no great myths. However, the Roman mythographer Hyginus tells us that it was the crab that tried to bite Heracles while he was fighting the Hydra of Lerna, and which the hero mercilessly crushed. Hera, who detested Heracles as the fruit of her husband Zeus' adulterous loves with Alcmena, wanted to reward the crustacean by immortalizing him in the sky. Then followed the Gemini era, between 6000 and 4000 B.C. Horses were domesticated in this era; some Indo-European peoples of Central Asia had been doing this for some time, and they sold them to the Sumerians. Not for nothing are the Dioscuri known as horse tamers, an epithet we also find in Homer when he speaks of Hector. In traditional Hindu astrology, which differs from ours, we do not consider constellations but nakshatras, segments of the ecliptic that may contain one or more stars. Under the nakshatra Punarvasu, which includes the stars we know as Castor and Pollux (the brightest in the constellation Gemini) Rama was born. The word Punarvasu means return, restoration, renewal. Later, from 4000 to 2000 B.C., we have the Taurus era. In Egypt Api, in India Shiva riding a bull, the bull sacrificed by Gilgamesh, the golden calf of the Jews, the bull of Mithras, bull worship, and so on.

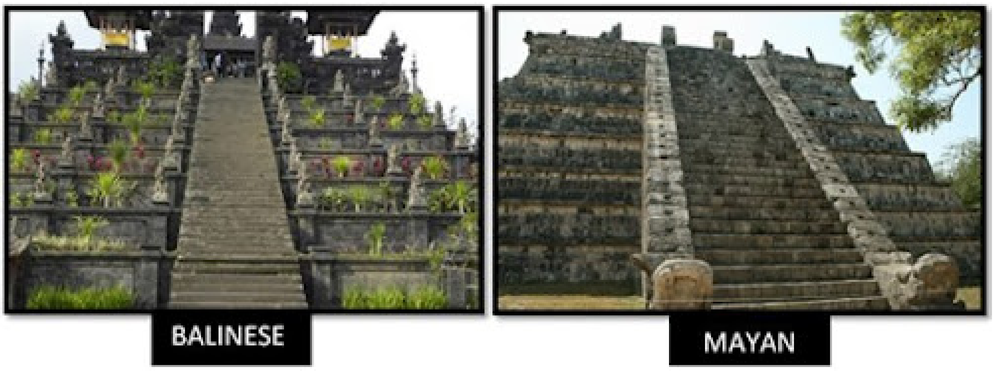
We have now come to the zodiacal era of Aries, the first sign of Fire, from 2,000 B.C. We have the burning bush of Moses, a clear and obvious symbol of fire, and Moses himself is depicted with two horns on his head as he descends from Mount Sinai. The 'Ram is terrible, capable of uncontrollable wrath. God commands Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, but then replaces him with a ram. Jews celebrated the first month of spring by eating lamb, a custom perpetuated in the slaughter of lambs for the Christian Passover. In the *Vedas*, the equinoctial transition from the age of Taurus to that of Aries is described as yet another reincarnation of Vishnu, who descended to earth to restore life to Agni, god of fire. Vishnu must control the original, uncontrolled and devastating fire, directing it into constructive forms as a mighty sacred fire of the universal spirit. We find Rama (according to the *Vedas* the seventh incarnation of Vishnu) ascribing to himself the sign of Aries as a symbol of strength, courage, divine wisdom, and initiation. In the *Mahabharata* and *Puranas*, the sign is represented by Shiva. His fire is referred to as devastating, but also purifying and fertilizing. The Sumerians called the first month of spring the month of the lamb. Alexander the Great was effigyed on coins of the time with ram's horns adorning his head, identifying him with the sun in the sign of Aries and confirming his presumed direct descent from Jupiter Ammon or, better yet, from the Egyptian Min, later to become Ammon-Ra and absorbed by the Greeks as Jupiter-Ammon.

At the beginning of the Christian era the Piscean era began. Note that as at the end of the Taurus era the sacrifice of bulls was succeeded by the sacrifice of lambs, with the advent of Christ the fish became the symbol of recognition among Christians. It is not worth talking about this symbol, too well known to all, the image of the fish is found everywhere, especially after the death of Christ, who was previously said to be the lamb of God and later symbolized by the Greek christogram Ichthys. Not to mention the miraculous fishing worked by Jesus Christ, the twelve apostles who were largely fishermen, and the multiplication of the loaves and fishes.

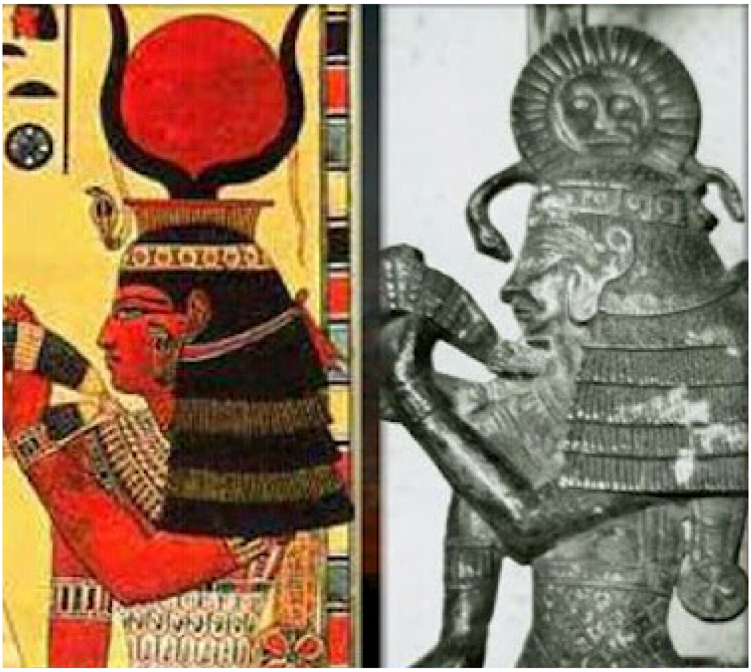
A small memento: I considered eras of 2000 years each, whereas I should have calculated periods of about 2160 years, but I wanted to simplify, partly because defining exactly the beginning and end of an era would be somewhat problematic. I apologize for the inaccuracy, but I would not have been able to do better than that. Another rough calculation you can find previously is the one enunciated in the so-called Third Code.

But I have bored you too much, my patient and hapless readers, with this caterpillar of astronomical considerations, however please consider that the assumption we are dealing with is truly complex, and we will not come to an unambiguous conclusion, too many factors and too many disciplines to know. I am neither a philosopher nor a mythographer, I am just a curious person, somewhat like you: if you were not curious, you would not have come this far. And you would not continue reading these notes. After all, there is a lot of meat in the fire, plenty of it. There could be more, but I too have my limits. For I do not study to know more, but to be less ignorant. I just received from one of my correspondents some pictures, which he took from a TV program in the United States. Regardless of the comments with which the images were sent to me, which I will not transcribe because I do not share them, it seems to me in any case appreciable to search for concordant elements in different places and at different times.



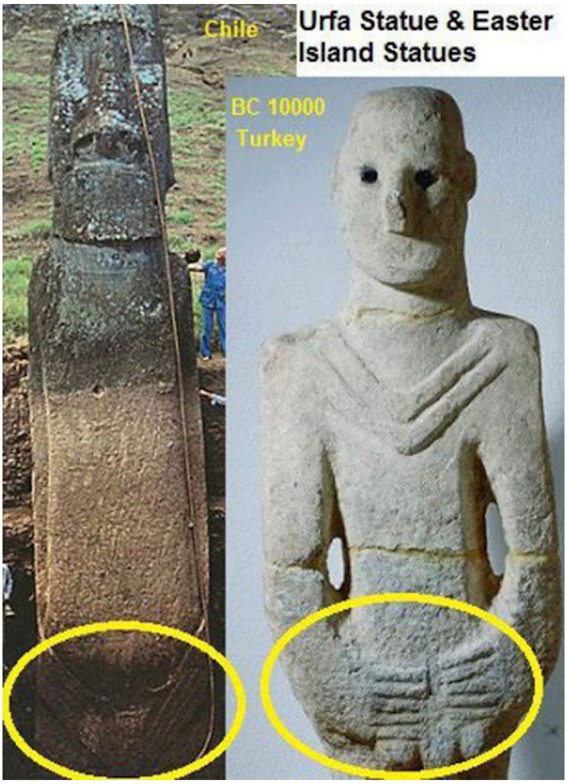


The similarity of the constructions evidently attracts attention. Perhaps a coincidence ? I don't know, and I don't venture to speculate, which would be far-fetched anyway. What is strange, leaving aside the architectural scheme that might coincide by constructional necessity, is the similarity of the decorative heads.



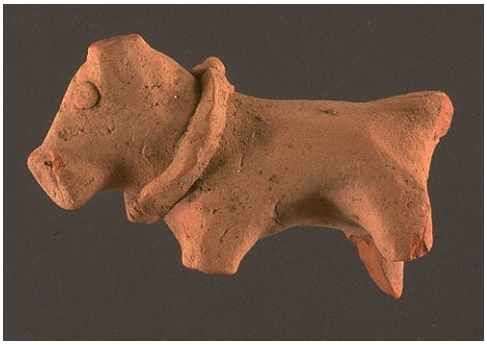
In these photographs one can appreciate the comparison of an Egyptian image of Isis (left) with one found (right) in Father Carlo Crespi's metal library in Ecuador, which I had mentioned before, with a thousand reservations, which I continue to maintain. Perhaps it is a forgery, perhaps not. If it is a forgery, the case is closed, but if it were an original find, it would give much food for thought. I suspend all judgment, the wisest thing is to wait for the opinion of archaeologists to assess its antiquity, if any.

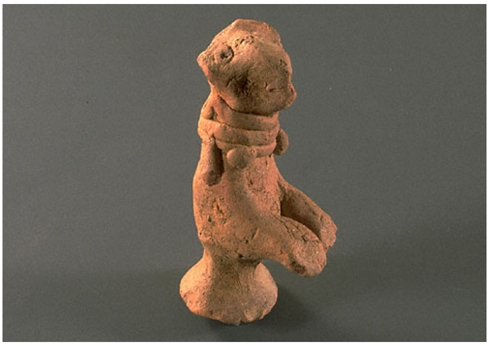
Below is a comparison between the well-known Easter Island statues and a statue found in present-day Turkey. Apart from the type of faces, which are extremely similar, the respective position of the hands is striking. The Turkish statue comes from the archaeological excavations in Urfa and would be the oldest statue, so far found, in the world, dating back 13,500 years. It was discovered during excavations in Balikligöl, along with flint arrows and spearheads. Other excavations in nearby areas have uncovered the remains of an 11,500-year-old temple at Göbeklitepe and the remains of over 11,000-year-old dwellings at Nevale Cori. Agriculture was already practiced here. However, the statue, about two meters high, discovered in 1993, represents a male holding his genital organ with both hands. It is made of limestone, with eyes carved out of obsidian. Found in a Neolithic temple, it is believed by archaeologists to be a god of reproduction or eroticism.



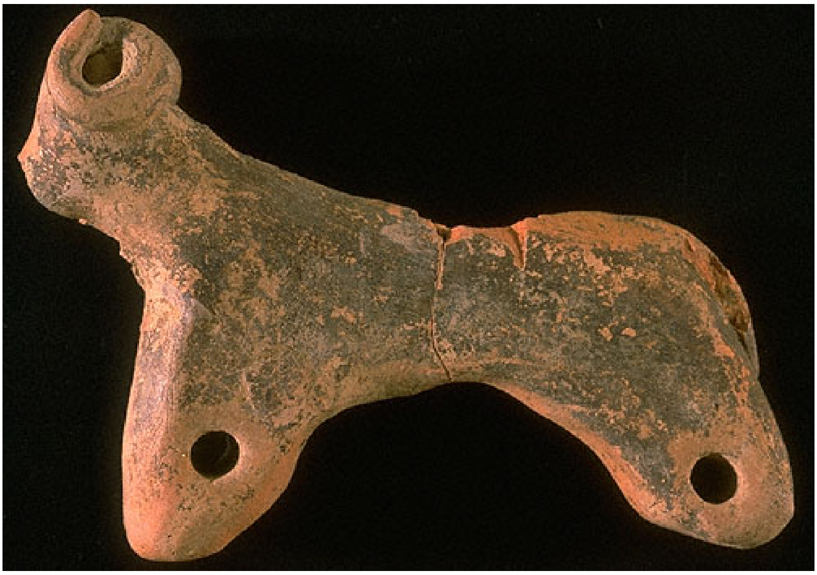
Below can be appreciated (left) some mummies from the Wari culture, one of several peoples who inhabited Peru in ancient times, in the area where the city of Lima now stands. These mummies, covered with six layers of wool cloth, were extracted from a pyramid and had their faces covered with a blue-eyed mask. Even among the Sumerians, blue eyes were a hallmark of aristocrats and gods. Ancient Sumerian nobles had blue eyes and often wore beards, as evidenced by the many sculptures found.

Among the artifacts found during excavations in Harappa, in present-day Pakistan, many of which appear to be children's toys, we note a dog with a collar, which reminds us that as early as 5,000 years ago the dog was a domesticated animal bred not for hunting, but to keep humans company. Some texts from ancient Mesopotamia mention imports received from the land of the "Meluhha," a clear reference to the Indus civilization. Among these imports, according to some interpretations, would have been a type of colored dog. Many dog figurines, apparently toys, have been found at Harappa and other Indus sites. The collars found on these figurines indicate domestication. The figurine of the dog asking with its front paws in front of its body , a posture that is commonly associated with dogs, is rather schematic on a circular base. The figurine wears an elaborate collar decorated with applied discs that may represent pearls or precious stones.

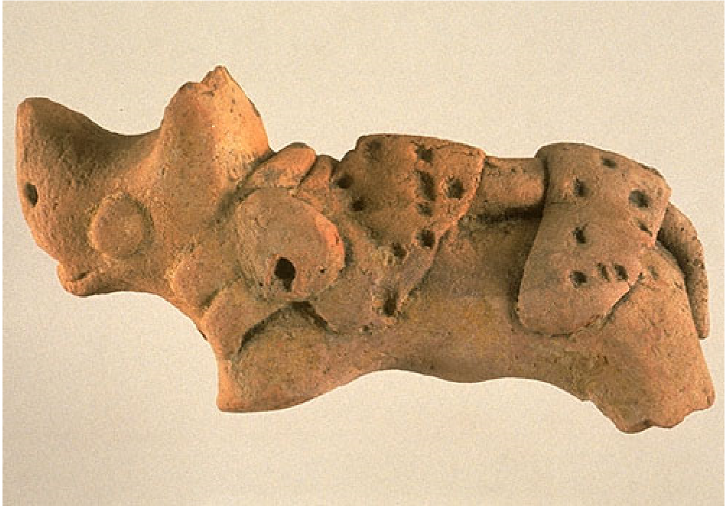




Some types of figurines had side holes on the ends of the legs to put wheel axles in, like this bull.

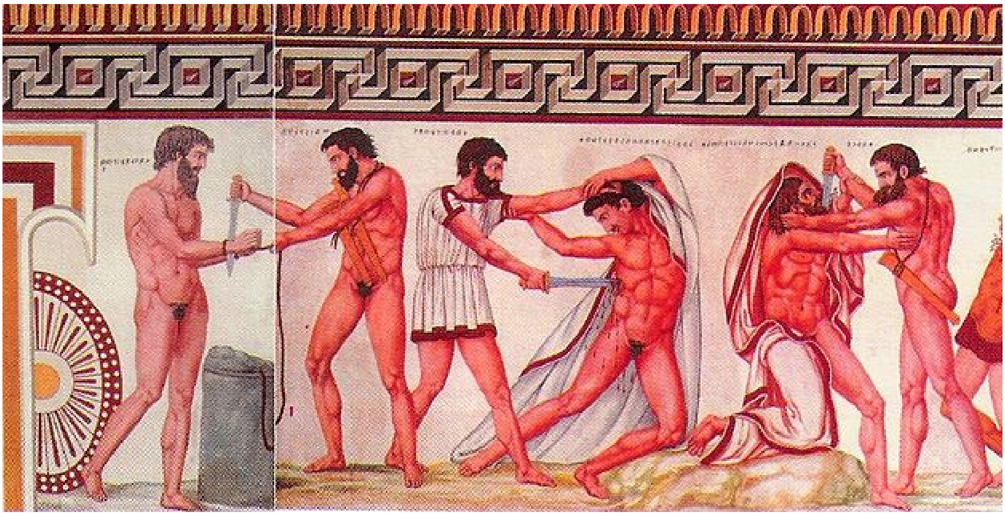


Although it was definitely a wild animal, some of the rhinoceros figurines wore collars. It seems unlikely that the rhinos were domesticated; they probably represented captured animals.



Many female figurines have been found, always with bare breasts. The one displayed below brings to mind some Cretan images, certainly more refined, such as the famous snake goddess we see for comparison at right. A goddess who would represent the values of a matriarchal society.

But if we talk about matriarchy, how can we not remember the Swiss Johann Jakob Bachofen (*Das Mutterrecht and The Mothers and Olympian Manhood. Studies in the Secret History of the Ancient Mediterranean World*)? His studies, based on extensive philological knowledge, suffered fierce ostracism on the part of the academics of his time. It must now be acknowledged that he laid the methodological foundations of his work in defining the concept of the symbol "resting in itself," which thus draws on the metaphysical truth that finds its concrete embodiment in history. Through his discourse he defined, through the study of symbols and myths, the primordial essence of the historical dialectic, namely the alternation in society of matriarchal and patriarchal phases. According to this author, the beginnings of human history are characterized by a succession of phases in which first the maternal element would prevail (and with it the earth and water symbolisms, natural law, sexual promiscuity, community of goods) and later the paternal element (and with it the heavenly symbolisms, positive law, monogamy, private property). The transition between these phases would have been marked by periods of violent women's power as a rebellion against the physical supremacy of the male in the early days of civilization, a power that later degenerated. What is interesting is that Bachofen bases his research on myths, from which he draws a pattern, believing that symbols are testimonies, not poetic inventions. Among his studies, I find very intriguing the myth of Tanaquilla, where he traces the influence of women in the designation of the last kings of Rome, Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullius (designated as Mastarna = magister in Etruscan) and LuciusTarquinius the Superbus. Aside from the fact that these are evidently Etruscan kings, as evidenced also by the name (Lucius = Lucumon), there had also been another relevant precedent, that of the Sabine Numa Pompilius, shrewdly advised by the nymph Egeria. Unfortunately, the official history of Rome is stingy regarding these archaic protohistoric figures, and as for Servius Tullius, we have only a few epigraphic fragments. Perhaps the best confirmation of this tradition comes from a singular document, the painted frieze of the François Tomb at Vulci, dating from the last decades of the fourth century B.C., at least two centuries after the events presumably described.



As far as we are concerned, the problem of the relationship between matriarchy and patriarchy, forms that succeeded each other in various epochs, brings to mind Wirth.'s claim that the matriarchal system was the primal one. This interpretation is supported by the discovery of many female depictions, the so-called prehistoric Venuses, depicted in the form of opulent matrons, representative images of Mother Earth. However, we also have many menhirs, a clear phallic symbolism, although it must be admitted that many others present breasts, a symbol of fertility of the mother goddess. It is difficult to assert in what order of succession needs to arrange matriarchy and patriarchy, it somehow becomes an impossible question like asking whether the egg or the chicken was born first. Following a certain logic, we should assume that primitive human groups organized themselves around groups of hunters, while women would have remained waiting, possibly checking that the fire did not go out (hence then the Vestals and all the various priestesses scattered around the globe to guard the sacred fire, such as the Accla or virgins of the Sun among the Incas). How the transition was then from matrons to "evolved" women is by no means simple. Bachofen sees a demetrical nature, linked to the idea of generation, and an Amazonian woman, imposing herself in some way on the man. It would seem, however, that a differentiation of the female essence can be ascribed to the separation between the Aryas of India and the Iranians. Indicative of this is the difference between the Avestic Ušas and the Vedic Uşas, both representations of the dawn, In the Iranian text she does not appear endowed with divine personality nor does she have the seductive appearance that we find in the *Rig-veda*, where the dawn looks more like Eos, the Greek one, young, comely and always looking for love. Perhaps the Zoroastrian reformation wanted to remove these features possibly present in the protohistory common to the three traditions. Indeed, in the *Avesta* seductive behavior is typical of Daevish females, while in the *Vedas* the Dawn is celebrated for her mischief, her nakedness, and her sexual ease. Unlike Zoroastrianism, which considers these qualities characteristic of Jahi, a filthy and lascivious female-demon, almost a forerunner of Lilith. This could represent a moment of conceptual separation, also applied to the social sphere, between the matron hypostasis of Mother Earth and the prevaricating female who abuses power and is undermined by it. But these are already lucubrations on a hypothetical basis, thoughts at large. which may be worth considering, but which should not be taken as fool's gold either.

IN CONCLUSION

A whole, is what had a beginning,

A middle and an end.

– Aristotle

It has been a long walk, in the Peripatetic style, through myths, hypotheses, sometimes profound sometimes naive attempts to search for an explanation, some truth. But I do not possess the Truth, my only wealth are the two ravens who have faithfully accompanied me, as only animals and gods can do. Huggin and Munnin, the Thought father and son of the intellect and the Remembrance emerging from the tumultuous flow of blood.

Indistinguishable often from imagination.

I think it appears to everyone, as it does to me, that Hyperborea, Atlantis, Eden are different names for a single reality (or unreality, since reality is Maya, as a Chilean friend, deeply connected to Hinduism, stated.

Once upon a time, before there was time as we conceive it, there was a place, perhaps nonexistent, where men, the ancient and divine ones, contemplated the sky revolving around them, with a harmonious and unchanging movement, the true harmony of the spheres. Whether it was the stars that moved or whether it was the earth, who cares?

What we perceive matters, not what it is (or seems to be).

Then, for some arcane reason a flood of ice came upon this distant land, which became par excellence the first *wasted land* with which the end of prehistory began, while history had yet to be born. The memory was perpetuated through myths and came, deformed and contaminated, to us, who can no longer understand it.

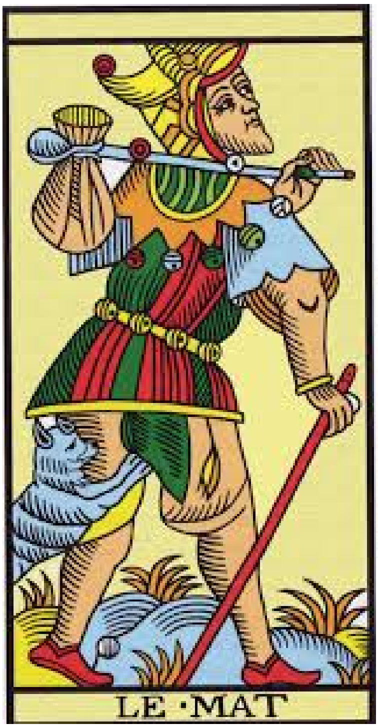
Every now and then, however, a flicker of light illuminates our little consciousness, which we claim to call science, undermining the foundations of established beliefs. According to what we have seen and heard in our tortuous journey, the most logical explanation (I said logical, not necessarily the truest and only one) would lead us to believe that the primeval land of our ancestors was located around the north pole, where they lived in contact with the gods, the stars, in eurhythmic concordance with the human and the divine. Agreeing with Marco Bulloni's shrewd theory, which places their ceremonial center in the White Sea.

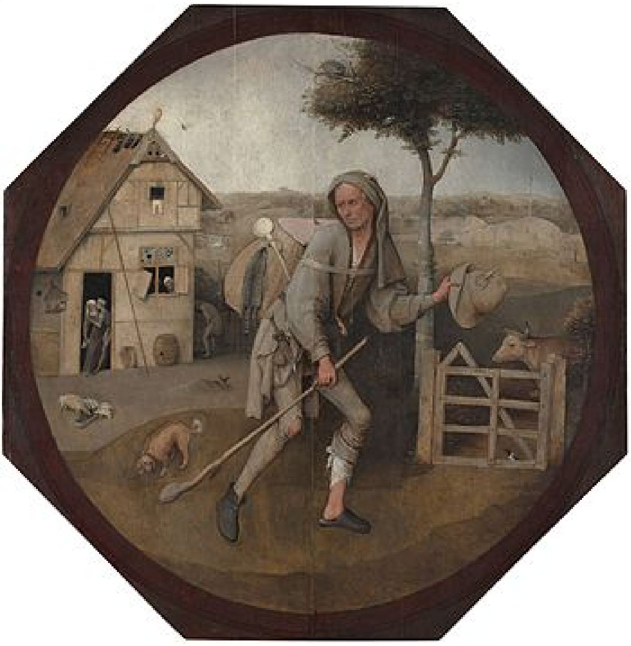
That then the root cause of their exodus was a variation in the tilt of the Earth's axis, I do not find tenable (as did Joscelyn Godwin in his *The Polar Myth*), so I did not see fit to call in either Immanuel Velikovsky (*Worlds in Collision*) or Jno Cook (*Saturnian Cosmology*); their theories are undoubtedly fascinating, but perhaps beyond our purposes.

Our ancestors descended from the northern extremities of Eurasia, spreading out in different directions: towards the Baltic, where brother peoples were already living, taking part in the real Trojan War, as sharply discovered by Felice Vinci, then descending into Greece, into the eastern Mediterranean, into Italy through the Camonica Valley; on another side they passed the Caucasus, giving rise to what was known as Caucasian Albania, and beyond, approaching Mesopotamia, with the kingdoms of the Mitanni and Hittites; through present-day Afghanistan they occupied Iran on one side and India on the other; still others crossed Xinjiang, crossed into Korea and populated Japan, giving rise to the Jomon culture, the first of which clay artifacts are known, dating back 10.000 years. Some crossed Beringia or perhaps even the Behring Strait in their fragile but daring boats, dispersing to the Americas, while others sailed across the Pacific and mingled with other peoples.

Only in this way, it seems to me, can we understand the persistence of myths across time and space, as asserted and validated through many years of study and research by de Santillana and von Dechend. How else can one justify the myth of Krishna, wounded by an arrow from the hunter Jara in the heel, his only vulnerable point, like Achilles? The same Krishna who escaped a massacre of innocent newborns intended by an evil king who had learned of the birth of a future king. Myth perpetuated in the Gospels. The day Krishna leaves the earth is the first day of the Kali-yuga.

What about the image of the faithful dog in the Mahabharata (where it follows King Yudhisthira), in the *Shah-name* of Firdusi (where Khusraw or Cosroe compares himself to a dog), in the *Kalevala* (where Kullervo is accompanied by the black dog Musti), in the Roman myth of Lucius Junius called Brutus (=stupid, because he pretended to be one by barking like a dog to deceive Tarquin, as Hamlet pretended to be a fool to deceive his usurping uncle). One is still reminded of the hunter's dog Orion, which is found later in the iconography of St. Roch as well as in Tarot's Arcanum 0, the Fool. The image looks too much like the peddler of Jeronimus Bosch, this visionary painter, not to be remembered. As well as the woodcut of Jean Gerson as a pilgrim by Dürer.





Even the snake-slaying Greek Heracles has his likenesses scattered among different mythic traditions: Kullervo in the Kalevala at the age of three smashes the cradle, charms wolves and turns them into cattle; Krishna overturns a chariot, cuts down trees and turns his own hair into wolves.

We always find avenging gods or heroes of the father: Horus, Hamlet, Ninurta...

Too many gods sink into the earth, and too often we find crushing mills.

What can we say about the Rape of Europa? We find here Zeus transformed into a white bull kidnapping the Phoenician maiden, who then begets Minos, Radamanto and Sarpedon. Minos became king of Crete, where we know of the practice of taurocatapsia, typical of the Minoan civilization, but present among the Hittites, in Syria, Bactria and the Indus Valley. It was a form of bull worship, consisting of acrobatic leaps over the animal. Something of this ritual seems to have survived to the present day with Iberian bullfighting, some traditional competitions in southern France, and the better-known San Fermin festival in Pamplona.

And the various heroes, once they have fulfilled their mission or, put another way, exhausted their karma, are reunited with that deity whose Avatara they are. Just to reiterate the concept, the Sanskrit term indicates the incarnation of a deity who descends to earth to restore the universal order, the balance of which has been undermined by demonic forces. Perhaps the best depiction of the cyclical nature of time is that of the Wheel of Fortune, the 10th Arcanum of the Tarot, in Albrecht Dürer's version, with the donkey-legged jester about to fall and the donkey-like subhuman clinging in vain to the moving wheel. All overlooked by a stolid animal, still a donkey, beating the rhythm of movement with a tambourine. These are representative elements of the animalistic nature of man whose *Vanitas* does not allow him to recognize and accept the changing sense of fate like the moon, *Fortuna levis sicut Luna* (*Carmina Burana*) as it is bound to a purely material world. Just to recall the "asin bigio gnawing a red and turquoise thistle" of Carduccian memory. And the wheel is overpowered by the hand of fate that continues, undeterred, to grind human misfortunes with inhuman indifference.

I leave you now, for your convenience, with an aproximate chronology, based on the dates collected from the various authors encountered in this adventure, to attempt to sketch an imperfect global outline. The dating is always referred to.e.v. (forward vernacular era), unless otherwise indicated.

Without responsibility or guarantee, as the bankers say.

3,400,000 : animal bones with signs of precise cuts with sharp stones

350,000 : symmetrically engraved elephant tibia.

130,000-100,000-50,000 : assumed birth of the spoken language

90,000-60,000 : geometric engravings on bones

75,000 : Toba catastrophe (perhaps few survivors, with only one language)

50,000 : arrival of the first humans (however, not the ancestors of today's aborigines) in Australia (hence the Panamaritee type graffiti)

50,000 : language dispersion in Africa and Asia

48,000 : men in the Americas

38,000 : birth of language groups

30,000 : the phases of the moon were calculated.

30,000 : Behringia passage open

22,000 : remains of human bones in Japan

20,000-12,000 : end of Wurm glaciation, spread of hunting groups

18,500-15,000: Altamira and Lascaux cave paintings

18,000-13,000 : Europoid presence in America

16,000 : cro-magnons from Siberia and northern Europe descend into Central Asia and pass the Behring Strait

13,000 : abstract symbols on cave walls

14,000-12,000 : first great flood

12,500 : Behringia passage open

12,000-10,000 : Jomon pottery in Japan

12,000 : prehistoric venus type statuette in Japan (Higashiomi, prefecture of Shiga)

12,000 : the Ainu arrive in Japan

11,000-8,800 : age of Leo

10.450 : date the message was sent according to Terzoli

10,000 : Orion indicates the spring equinox

10,000 : beginning of the glacial period

10,000-9,500 : second great flood

9,500 : Behringia passage open

9,000 ; sheep are domesticated in Mesopotamia.

9,000 ; spelt is grown in Syria

8,800-6,840 : age of Cancer

8,000 : Chatal Huyuk

8,000 : wheat, barley and legumes are grown in Jericho

8,000- 5,000 : large migrations

8,000 : Europoid mummy from the Spirit Cave (Nevada).

8,000 : pottery in Mesopotamia.

8,000-7,500 : third great flood

7,000 : beginning of myths and scientific knowledge

7,000 : rice cultivation in Malaysia

6,640-4,800 : Gemini era

6,000-4,000 : myth-making in the late Neolithic period

5,000-3,000 : Orion in the equinox

5,000-3,000 : Aborigines occupy Australia

5,000: rice cultivation in China

5,000 : language dispersion in Southeast Asia

4,500 : Vedic civilization

4,480-2,320 : Taurus era

4,400 : Sumerians know the constellation Orion

4,000 : contacts between Ecuador and Asia (Smithsonian Institute genetic studies)

4,000 : megaliths with carvings in Salta (northern Argentina).

4,000 : ruins of the Kilmes civilization (northern Argentina)

4,000 : Iron technology has been developing in Korea since the Neolithic period without passing through the Bronze Age, through the Jankowski culture

3,500 : horses are domesticated in Central Asia

3,000-1500 : amalgamation of Indo-Aryan invaders with the civilization of the Indus Valley

3,200 : Kilmes mummies

3000-1,400 : Pleiades in the equinox

3,000: beginning of Mesopotamian writing

2,900 : Egyptian mummies

2,587: grand planetary conjunction (according to Mark Bolts)

2,320-160 e.v. : age of Aries

2,200 : Aryans arrive in India.

2,000 : Disc of Nebra (the oldest representation of the sun, moon and the Pleiades)

2,000 : Minoan civilization

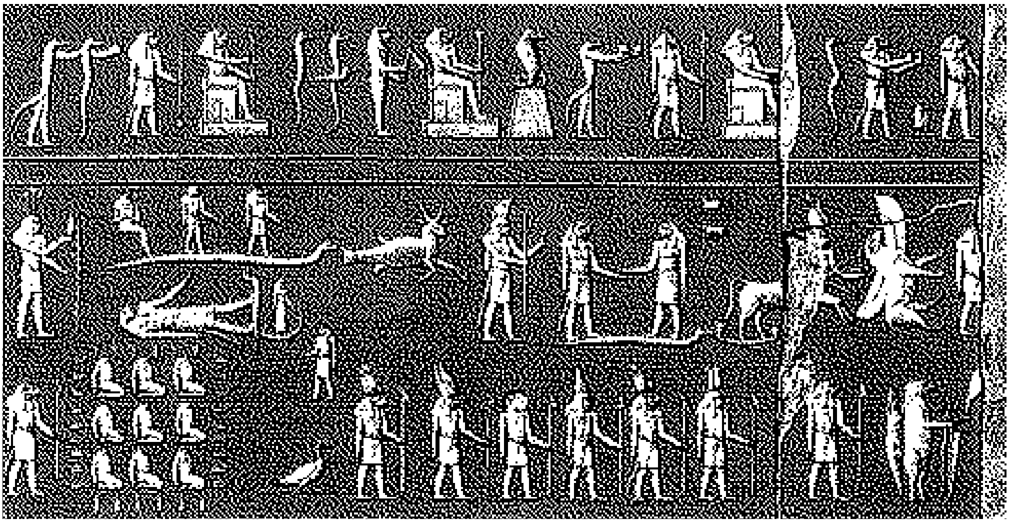
1,500 : submergence of the White Sea petroglyphs.

1,500 : Disc of Phaistos , linear A and B Cretan

1,250 : catastrophe of Atlantis (according to Spanuth)

1,200 : Chinese oracular writing already organized and mature

200 : Egyptian zodiac of Esna in the temple of Khnum (destroyed in 1843 to make way for a channel, evidently much more important!)



I reproduce a drawing of it from a table in the *Description de l'Égypte ou Recueil des observations et des recherches qui ont été faites en Égypte pendant l'expédition de l'armée française*, published in the first half of the 19th century. It has a rectangular structure, unlike the much better known (and more recent: 50 e.v.) zodiac of Dendera. However, for the record, I report that the latter would apparently show, as insinuated by some, a vision of the sky from the 3rd millennium B.C. I make no judgment on this. However, I quote what Abbé Moreux wrote in his *La Science mystérieuse des Pharaons*, referring to the Zodiacs of Denderah and Esneh: "Everything proves to us that the Egyptians made no use of the zodiac, their 12 lunar months of 30 days being divided into three parts of 10 days. The origin of the zodiac is undoubtedly Chaldean. Very ancient tablets mention several constellations of it, but the complete set has not yet been discovered. However, the oldest documents reveal that in 3000 B.C. Chaldean astronomers had noted that spring began at the time when the sun occupied Taurus, the symbol of Marduk (Spring Sun). In contrast, Scorpio corresponded to the autumn equinox; then came winter, with its water signs-Aquarius and Pisces-as corresponding to a rainy season. Another, more recent tablet teaches us that at the time of Ashurbanipal (c. 650 BCE) the zodiac was certainly complete; the cuneiform document is divided into 12 equal sectors, one for each month, the beginning of which, like that of each decade, is fixed by the heliacal rising of a star of its own. A century later the practice of the zodiac is current. A tablet from the time of Cambises (522 B.C.) bears the names of the 12 signs now employed to this day. Thus, we are not only sure that the origin of the zodiac is Chaldean, but we also have an explanation for a fact that at first seems strange: the division of the circle into 360 degrees, a division calculated on the approximate value of the sun's displacement between the zodiac constellations. Perhaps this is the origin of the duodecimal system long associated with the decimal system that prevailed later for practical uses."

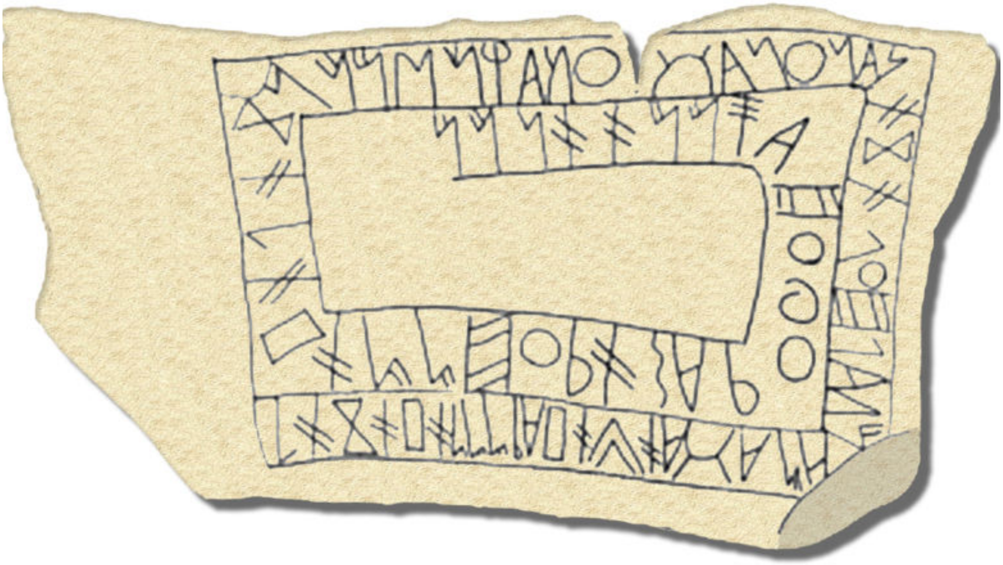
A very simple and lapidary (but not useless) observation: the further back in time we go, the greater becomes the impossibility of hypothesizing movements and developments of human beings who preceded us. We have ascertained the existence of archaeological and paleontological findings, we have seen the inexplicable persistence and spread of ancient myths, now it would be comfortable to be able to give a concrete and certain form to our remote past.

But I do not want to fall into the temptation, very common among those who engage in this kind of research, to create a fantasy world in the image and likeness of my own concepts; the truth is that it is always impossible for us to completely recover knowledge of the world.

At this point, assisted by the ever-present crows, I must mention an interesting theory on the distribution of populations in the ancient world, made by N.C. Doyto in his almost unobtainable work, *Les Races Humaines, Leurs origines, leures différences, leurs migrations, leurs mélanges*. The author, an elderly Belgian physician with multiple interests and a solid anthropological background, saw the great leucoderma race occupying Siberia and northern Europe, later expanding to Behringia, Korea and Japan, India and Persia, and south-central Europe. Instead, he hypothesized that the large xanthoderm race would move from south-central Asia and then expand into China and Indochina, with offshoots in the Middle East and into Korea and Japan. Instead, melanoderms would have moved from present-day Arabia to Africa. The beginning of the migrations would be dated around 80,000 B.C., ending around 10,000, at the time of the Wurm glaciation.

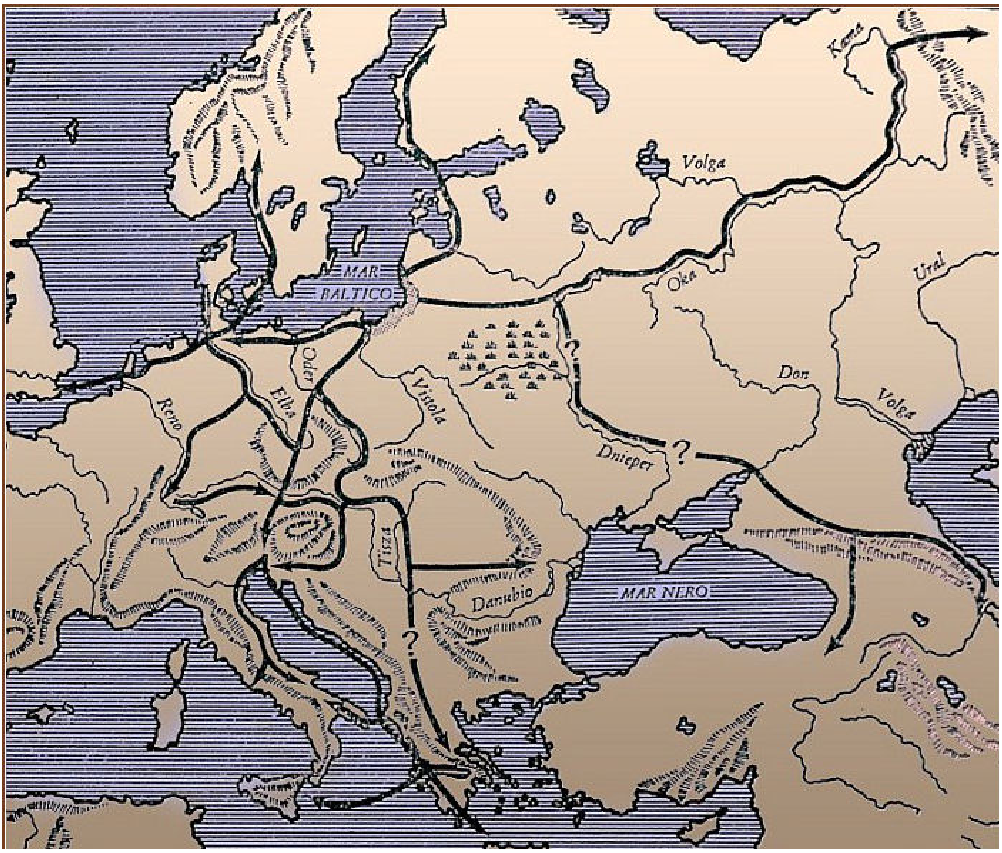
On all these grounds, we can speculate that a Neolithic civilization settled on the coast of Western Siberia, finding its religious and cultic center in the White Sea, as sagaciously proposed by Bulloni, later expanding into the Baltic in the early Bronze Age, giving rise to the Homeric epic, following Felice Vinci's reconstruction. Bulloni's archaeoastronomical analysis would show that a particular planetary conjunction would have been studied in the Solovki Islands in 2,587 B.C. But in order to do such a thing, the men of what he rightly calls Atlantis would have had to have had centuries and centuries of observing the sky and its phenomena behind them. And when, by cataclysm, by climate change, by a traumatic cause certainly natural, they had abandoned their original lands, then they swarmed to Europe, Persia and India, giving rise to different but related cultures, preserving ancient myths. Thinking back to the *Vedas, the Avesta*, the Epic of Gilgamesh and the more recent Bible, if the deity had warned men, suggesting an enclosure or ark to save themselves, one might think that the antediluvians possessed scientific knowledge such that they could foresee some planetary catastrophe (comet? asteroid?) and could then provide for themselves. However, since abrupt climate change is explicitly mentioned in the *Avesta*, we might assume that some of these *ante litteram* migrants came from an area affected by falling temperatures, but not by the impact of a possible meteorite, such as the White Sea area. Therefore, one could think of a common civilization, scattered across northern Siberia, with common linguistic bases determined by the bottleneck caused by the Toba catastrophe, the impressive eruptive event that 80,000-70,000 years ago drastically reduced the population to a few thousand individuals, while also suddenly lowering the environmental temperature. This could easily explain the reduced human genetic variability, as well as the propagation of cultures that spread northward from Taiwan and the China Sea area, in one with rice cultivation.

But back to our Hyperboreans, they descended to the Black Sea by river, arriving in what is known as Histria *Pontica*, an area where the Greek polis Histria stood, in present-day Dobruja. Adriatic Istria is best known, which is said to have been inhabited by the peoples of the castellieri (fortified Bronze Age villages, the remains of which can be found in Istria, central Italy and even the Gargano), the Celts and the Thracians from Histria Pontica. But the story of the colonizing Thracians does not seem at all convincing to me. I remember, again thanks to one of my crows, that Istros (’ Ιστρος) was the name the Greeks gave to the Danube and the areas surrounding its mouths. They believed that somehow the river was a kind of canal that united the two Istros, unifying various transit routes, river and land. Those routes coming down from the Baltic were certainly not to be a problem for peoples accustomed to navigation. The version of the Gaeli's voyage from their departure from Scythia to their arrival in Spain, as narrated by the *Leabhar Gabhála na hÉireann* (Book of the Taking of Ireland), apart from episodes derived from later Greek or Latin traditions, such as the siren song or the intoxicating spring, is interesting. The Gaels set out from Scythia and sailed for seven years into the Caspian Sea (and then, according to another tradition, into the Libyan Sea) got lost in the middle of the sea and arrived at the northern end of the Rifei Mountains. From here, they descend overland to the problematic Macotic Swamps, where they remain for three hundred years. Their descendants put back to sea and find themselves in the Mediterranean, rounding Crete and Sicily and finally arriving in Spain. It should be clarified that in antiquity the term "Scythians" denoted everything northeast of Greece, that is, the entire western and northern shores of the Black Sea, an arc that stretched from the lower Danube, beyond the Sea of Azov, to the gates of the Caucasus and up northward. The Book of the Taking of Ireland then relates that the Gaels stayed seven years in the Caspian Sea, sailing northward, until they came to the northern ocean, what the ancients called the Scythian Ocean. Since the Caspian was already known in ancient times to be an enclosed sea, one might think of it as a voyage by river. This circumnavigation recalls something of the Argonauts' voyage. In fact, the Book of the Taking narrates that the Gaels skirted the world from the north. It was here that the Gaels found themselves for a week without anything to eat or drink until they sighted the northern promontory of the Rifei Mountains from afar. These mountains initially represented the far north, the boreal offshoot where the sun went into hiding and from where Borea was born. According to Callimachus and Pliny, the Rifei Mountains were located in the lands of the Hyperboreans. Hippocrates and Aristotle also place the Rifei Mountains on the northern border of Scythia. Modern assumptions tend to identify the Rifei with the Ural or Caspian mountains. Even the scene in which the Gaels find, near the Rifei, a land where the springs have the heady taste of wine, seems to recall the stories that were told about the Hyperboreans and their happy land. The Gaels would later descend southward to the Macotic Swamps. Perhaps the marshes of Lake Meotid, that is, the Sea of Azov. Or perhaps the lake region in Finland? In some versions, such as that of the poet Gilla Cóemain there is an extra stop: between sailing into the Caspian Sea and arriving at the Rifei Mountains, the Gaels would have stopped for a year and a season in the Libyan Sea. One might think of an interference with the story of the Argonauts, who, following an alternative route of their voyage, would have gone from the Black Sea to Libya via the Istro (the Danube) River, of which a secondary branch, according to some classical geographers, reached precisely the Adriatic in Istria. Perhaps the Irish chroniclers confusedly assembled sources they no longer understood.... Or perhaps it is we, today, who do not understand their geographical citations. In any case, it seems clear that these are still ancient stories of voyages made by experienced seafaring peoples.



People akin to those who, known as Sea Peoples, descended into the Mediterranean, bringing down around 1,170 B.C. the empire of the Hittites (which arose around 1,800 B.C.) also threatening Egypt and touching the coast of Palestine, where a portion settled, constituting the Philistine people. There is also thought of a possible kinship of one of the Sea Peoples, the Shardana, with the Sardinians, both because of the assonance of the name and the similarity of the weapons. Having in mind the nuraghi (dated 1,800-1,100 B.C.) I cannot help but think of the towers of the Great Solovetsky, surveyed by Bulloni (praise be to his name) and recall (the two crows sometimes go hand in hand) that the mythical hero of Sardinia, Norax, is said to have arrived at the head of the Iberians from Tartesso, (believed by many to be an Atlantean colony), whose inhabitants, according to Strabo (*Geography* III, 2-8), would have been the most civilized of the Iberians, knowing writing and possessing ancient books, poems and laws seven thousand years old. In efect, some stelae and tombstones have been found with writing in an Indo-European language, believed to be Tartessian.

The river routes from the White Sea through the Baltic Sea are numerous, as can be readily seen from the map below, in which we can appreciate numerous routes, including overland routes, that led in all directions from the north to the Mediterranean, Asia Minor, Britain (where there were important tin deposits) and eastern Siberia.



In addition there was the possibility of travel by sea, sailing along the Atlantic coast until crossing the Strait of Gibraltar. Here, on the southern coast of Spain, Tartesso would have arisen precisely, near the mouth of the Guadalquivir. From here it was easy to get to Mediterranean islands such as the Balearic Islands (with the Talayotic culture from talayot , buildings with a circular base similar to Sardinian nuraghi and Corsican towers), to Sardinia, already mentioned, to Sicily (with the Shakalasha, a people of the Sea, and the Sicans probably of Iberian origin), to Malta (where traces remain of a grandiose complex whose earliest settlement dates to the Tarxien phase of the late Maltese Neolithic (3000-2500 B.C.), to the coasts of North Africa (the Egyptians depicted the Libu or Libii as blond, bearded men with clear eyes).

I could also continue with the discovery of apparently Libyan writings in Java or the Pacific (Pitcairn Island) or in the United States (Davenport stele and Anubis caves), but I think it is appropriate to avoid this, at least for the time being, since these are still insufficiently documented discoveries that would support the thesis of daring navigators from prehistoric or at least remote and forgotten historical times.

I understand how you are all dissatisfied, something is still missing, this is a something (I dare not say work) of unfinished. Too much clutter, too much material, too many eras passed. I have not been able to space more, my limitations have forced me to do so. I hope, however, that I have succeeded in awakening some interest, for curiosity is a restless spring that arouses in us a constant desire to know, always going further, seeking perhaps something nonexistent but real.

I must remind everyone that this writing began as a search for the lost homeland, for that place (of time or space? or outside of all time and all space? or beyond all?), a journey that I have been on together with you, who have accompanied me, perhaps protesting a felt futility of the search. But perhaps you are still accompanying me on this wandering through a maze of myths. If so, here I must quote Nietzsche:

Let us look at each other. We are Hyperboreans - we know all too well that we live apart. "Neither by land nor by sea will you find the way to the Hyperboreans" - Pindar already knew this. Beyond the North, beyond the ice, beyond death - lie our life and our happiness.... We have discovered happiness, we know the way, we have *found the exit from long millennia of labyrinth. Who else has found it? - Perhaps modern man? - "I am capable of neither going out nor coming in; I am the one who knows neither how to go out nor how to come in"-sighs modern man.... We were sick of this modernity -- of a putrid peace, of a vile compromise, of all the virtuous filth of modern yes-and-no. This tolerance and breadth of heart, which everything "forgives," because everything "understands," is sirocco for us. Better to live among the ice, than among the modern virtues and winds of the South!... We were brave enough, without indulgence either for ourselves or for others: but for a long time we ignored where ever our courage was leading us. We became gloomy; we were called fatalists. Our fatum was fullness, tension, accumulation of strength. We thirsted for lightning and action, far from the happiness of the weak and resignation.... There was a storm around us, nature, which we are, became obscured -- for we had no way. Formula of our happiness: a yes, a no, a straight line, a goal....*

I dedicate to you, who have arrived here with me, this work of mine, completed through climbing on the shoulders of so many others, perhaps giants, perhaps Hyperboreans.

ESSENTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Many authors have been cited and many works reported, but it is clear to you as well as to me that listing everything would become long, scattershot and perhaps even boring (even more so than reading this book). Very often the listing of a boundless bibliography becomes a self-attestation of culture, in order to prove to readers that the author is not alone and therefore rests his theses on the opinions of others, more or less extensive, more or less shared. I have decided to avoid this path and have taken the liberty of reporting only a concise essential bibliography, which I strongly recommend that you read. These are books that will surely be able to clarify for you an infinity of points, which I have sometimes barely mentioned, and which deserve serious study instead.

ARNAIZ VILLENA Antonio and ALONSO GARCIA Jorge, *Egipcios, Bereberes, Guanches y Vascos*

BULLONS Mark, *I discovered the real Atlantis.*

BULLONS Mark, *The Sacred Labyrinth.*

BULLONS Mark, *Archaeoastronomical analysis of the Solovetsky Islands.*

CAVALLI SFORZA Luigi Luca, *Genes, Peoples and Languages.*

DOYTO N.C., *Les Races humaines, leurs origines, leurs différences, leurs migrations*

de SANTILLANA Giorgio and von DECHEND Hertha, *Hamlet's Mill.*

de VRIES Jan, *La Religion des Celtes*

GODWIN Joscelyn, *The Polar Myth*

MUNK Hermann, Kilmes - *Schlüssel zur ersten Weltkultur*

OPPENHEIMER Stephen, *Eden in the East*

TILAK Bâl Gangâdhar, *The Arctic Abode in the Vedas*

TERZOLI Giorgio, *The Code of the Gods*

VINCI Felice, *Homer in the Baltic.*

WARREN William Fairfield, *Paradise Found - the Cradle of the Human Race at the North Pole*

WILKINSON Toby, *The Genesis of the Pharaohs.*

It's really a very sparse bibliography, barely essential. I was really merciful.

Valete et plaudite!

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- *The Wheel of Fortune, tenth Major Arcana of the Tarot, woodcut by Albrecht Dürer (1494)*
- *Zodiac of Esna, from the Temple of Khnum*
- *Tombstone with presumably Tartessian writing (Fonte Velha, Bensafrim, Portugal)*
- *River, land and sea communication routes in ancient Europe*
- *Depiction of the Libii, from the tomb of Sethi (19th Dynasty, 1300 B.C.)*
- *Toward Walhalla (painting by Konrad Wilhelm Dielitz, representing the Valkyrie ascending with the soul of the warrior who died in battle)*